Blackwood's Standard Novels.

SHILLING SERIES

SIR FRIZZLE PUMPKIN

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

RB 78,376

BLACKWOOD'S

STANDARD NOVELS

SIR FRIZZLE PUMPKIN

ETC.

Rev. James White (1806-1862), who was born near Edinburgh, was the author of these tales. He was a clergyman in the Church of England but retired into private life and devoted himself to literary pursuits.

SIR FRIZZLE PUMPKIN

NIGHTS AT MESS

AND

OTHER TALES

NEW EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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SOME PASSAGES IN THE LIFE

OF

SIR FRIZZLE PUMPKIN, BART.

G. C. B.

INTRODUCTION.

My brethren of the sword have astonished me in nothing so much as in their complete mastery of the pen, and all the graces of composition. Where they picked up their style I cannot in the least make out. The mess-room is seldom redolent of the flowers of rhetoric, and the camp is, if possible, still less adapted to literary pursuits. It used formerly to be a reflection against the army, that very few members of that honourable profession were much addicted to the habit even of reading; but what would Smollett, and other worthies, who have painted us in such disparaging colours, say to us at the present day, when there are few messes which cannot boast of a considerable number of authors—historians, novelists, and memoir-writers, not to mention a confused and indistinguishable multitude of politicians and poets? Every officer now not only can read books (which is perhaps the greater achievement of the two,) but is expected to write them also. At all events, if this literary mania does not seize us while on active service, any interval of repose is certain to induce it with the utmost virulence. Immediately on retiring into civil life a wonderful change takes place on the most anti-bookish of one's messmates. The epaulettes ex-

pand into reams of foolscap, the sword converts itself into a pen, and the jolly soldier of half a year before, is transmogrified into an author. The world, in consequence, is inundated with military sketches:—ladies'-maids and sentimental milliners have wept over the soft recollections of romantic majors;—mercers' apprentices have handled the yard with the swagger of a field-marshal, from the inspiring stories of bloody-minded ensigns; and, in short, the slang of the camp has become as familiar as the words of ordinary conversation. The navy also has started in the same glorious pursuit. The gun-room is the scene of many a heroic description. Captains and lieutenants club to celebrate the honour, virtue, cleanliness, and piety of the British tars. Yard-arms, taffrels, tarpaulins, gaffs, and booms, hustle each other through every page; and boys and virgins are elevated and astonished at the elegant phraseology of the cockpit. My wonder all this time has been, in the first place, how they can find stories to tell; and, in the next place, how they can find words to tell them. For myself, I am as good as the best of them at an anecdote after dinner; my words come as pat to the purpose as possible; but the moment I take my pen into my hand—presto—all my power of story-telling is gone. Some word appears twice or thrice in the same sentence, my characters become confused, and the personages, whose wit is sure to create a laugh as I tell the story to my friends at table, are the stupidest fellows I ever met, when I write down their facetious responses in black and white. My opportunities of observation have been as good as those of any officer of my standing, and, as I said before, how the devil it is that they manage to tell long stories of two or three volumes, while I can't muster a single page, I can by no means divine. But though I have hitherto failed in my attempts, I have not been altogether discouraged. Perseverance, they say, will conquer in the end; and some of these days, I doubt not, I shall be able to manufacture a warlike tale as well as my neighbours. Besides the honour and reputation, there are other considerations which, it may easily be imagined, would make a successful novel by no means an unpleasant achievement to a captain on half-pay. Plutus, I

am sorry to confess, mingles in all my dreams of fame. I envy Colonel C. Thornton less for his inimitable style, and power of description, as the means of raising his reputation, than as the means of raising the wind. With such a pen as his, I should soon be in danger of becoming prouder of my purse than of my glory—my pocket should re-echo "sweet music of a silver sound," where now the jingling of keys "makes the void mirthful without change." But why should I indulge in such golden dreams? My confounded fingers grow stiff before I have finished a sentence, and sometimes I give way to despair, and fear I must rest contented as a story-*teller*, which is very different indeed from a story-*writer*.

While engaged with these thoughts, for I assure you I have long been tormented with this literary and money-making ambition, I luckily received an invitation to pass a few days in the country with a distinguished military friend. When I name General Sir Frizzle Pumpkin, G. C. B., T. K., &c., your curiosity will of course be excited to know something of the private habits of a hero whose public actions have awakened throughout his long and brilliant career so much admiration. In this I shall only gratify you in a slight degree. It is needless to inform you of his hospitality, his generosity, and his winning, and, indeed, his fascinating manners. These are all already sufficiently known. But while on this visit, I was struck with something in his demeanour different from what I had ever remarked before. The General seemed sometimes ill at ease. His habitual good nature seemed on some occasions to be inclined to leave him, and I could easily perceive that he was teazed and harassed more than he cared to show, by the compliments which a young nobleman of the party heaped on him, I confess with no sparing or delicate hand. This I ascribed to the natural modesty of a brave man—and I loved my distinguished host the more that I saw he shrank from the applauses his actions had deserved. Our time passed very pleasantly in spite of these interruptions, and I began to feel my regret, at leaving so excellent a friend, increase as the day of my departure approached. The rest of the guests had left us, and the day before that on which I had fixed to return to my lodging, the

baronet and myself were entirely alone. All the morning I had noticed something mysterious in his manner. He seemed on the eve, every now and then, of making me some communication, but suddenly checked himself, and turned the conversation to some other subject. We dined, and after dinner, when the bottle had made two or three rounds, the General told me he had something to relate. He began by inveighing more bitterly than I thought the occasion justified against the courtly and complimentary lord I have mentioned. He then, to my astonishment, said something of his conscience not allowing him to accept such praises; and on my expressing my wonder at his squeamishness, he told me he had long wished for some one to whom to make his confession, and on my faithfully promising to assist him with my counsel and advice, he filled up his glass and began as follows.

CHAPTER I.

You are aware that I am in possession of what the world generally considers the highest favours of fortune. I have risen to a distinguished rank in my profession, my wealth is more than commensurate with my desires, my friends, I may say without presumption, are zealously attached to me, and all these blessings are enhanced by the enjoyment of uninterrupted good health. In the enumeration of my advantages, it may be necessary also to remind you, that my actions have not been altogether unknown. Reputation, and an honorary addition to my name, are the rewards of my achievements. Crowning "a youth of labour with an age of ease," with every comfort which can rationally be desired, it might be thought there was nothing wanting to my entire felicity. But, alas! there is always something to mar our enjoyments—"some fatal remembrance—some sorrow that throws its bleak shade alike over our joys and our woes,"—

and by one overwhelming evil all my blessings are rendered of no avail. When I look around me, and see my fields rich with harvest, my lawns green with verdure, and remember that they were acquired from a generous and grateful country, a pang shoots through my heart, and I feel, with the writhings of humiliation and remorse, that I have not deserved its favours; that I have raised myself by a life of hypocrisy; and, in short, that these honours and riches, which were heaped upon me as the rewards of my bravery and resolution, have been bestowed—upon a coward.—Yes, on one of the most nerveless and pusillanimous of human beings. The praises of the public, the compliments of my friends, the whole paraphernalia of my stars and ribbons, fill me with a loathing of myself. If I had really merited such encomiums, I might have felt gratified by their being so universally accorded; but as it is!—You shall hear:

My youth was the most miserable period of my existence. My unresisting and easily intimidated character, made me the slave of any one who chose to domineer over me. The school at which I was educated was to me a collection of tyrants, rather than playmates, and though I was good-tempered and attentive, and consequently a favourite with the master, I was buffeted and despised by the very youngest of the boys. The name Miss Molly, by which I was known throughout the school, sufficiently shows the estimation in which I was held; and if any trick was to be played, any ghost to be raised, any toes to be tied at night, or any one tossed in a blanket for the amusement of the bedroom, Frizzle Pumpkin was sure to be the victim. Amidst scenes such as these, with any spirit which at first I might have possessed entirely broken, I arrived at the age of sixteen. Thin as a whipping-post, and remarkably tall for my years, I left the scene of my miseries, and resided for some months at home. Many consultations were held as to my future destination. My father, a good easy man, spoke in favour of the church, but my mother, who was a woman of spirit, and whose father had been an officer of considerable reputation, would hear of no other profession for me but the army. Their difference of opinion produced the result which might naturally

have been expected, namely, complete submission on the part of my father; and at last it was decided that their only hope should gain everlasting laurels as a soldier. This resolution took me entirely by surprise. My dreams at night were of nothing but wounds and blood. I thought of the certainty of being cut to pieces by some tremendous Frenchman; resistance never entered into my calculations, and as for glory, I never could imagine what was the meaning of the word. In this state of dismal foreboding my time was passed, and although I dreaded the profession to which I was doomed, still I was too much afraid of my mother's domineering temper, to protest against the choice she had made for me. A commission was speedily procured, and my fears, as the day of my departure approached, amounted to agony. My uniform itself failed to animate my courage, and my sword would have remained undrawn for ever, so great was my repugnance to cold iron. My mother, however, extricated it from its sheath with an impetuosity that made me tremble, and praised its make and temper with all the warmth of approval. My military troubles oppressed me beyond expression, even before I left my home. The trepidation of my mind on first discharging a pistol, it is impossible to describe; if any one has suffered shipwreck, or been spectator of an earthquake, or been bitten by a dog notoriously mad, he may form some slight idea of my feelings when I touched the trigger. Earth swam around me as I listened for the report, and a thousand lights danced before my closely-shut eyes as my senses seemed to expire in a kind of mental deliquium.

All this time I must, however, inform you, my fear rested almost entirely in my mind. My outward man showed few symptoms of the internal struggle; and I am not aware of having betrayed the intensity of my terrors on any occasion, unless by an additional paleness, and a total incapacity to speak. The day fixed for my joining the depôt at last came on; and my courage was, if possible, diminished by every hour that passed. My father, who evidently participated in my alarms, but did not dare to show them, talked, with a faltering voice and a tear in his eye, about Westminster Abbey and a peerage, and made convulsive efforts to be face-

tious, while it was evident his fears for my safety were only repressed by his fears of his spouse's displeasure. However, the moment at length arrived, and, after ascertaining of the driver the steadiness and good temper of his horses, I stepped into a post-chaise, and soon found myself in the small country town of ——, where the depôt of my regiment was stationed. The introduction to my brother officers it is useless to describe. Most of them were young and inexperienced like myself; but, unlike me, they were all filled, to overflowing, with enthusiasm for the service, and anticipations of future glory. Our time was spent in the usual way that time is spent by military officers in a country town. The post-office was regularly visited after parade; an old billiard-table, with a considerable part of the cloth remaining, was a resource for two or three hours; and lounging from one end of the main street to the other, showing ourselves and feathers to the best advantage, constituted all the rest of our employment. My fears now began gradually to abate. There was no immediate prospect of our being ordered on foreign service, and the routine of my existence became more agreeable, in the exact proportion that I found it less dangerous than I had expected.

As the town of —— is situated on a river, many parties were of course formed for boating, and when the weather grew warm, for bathing also. I have always had a horror of the water; but as I was aware that accidents might occur, however carefully guarded against, I lost no time in providing myself with a sustaining belt. In spite, however, of this precaution—and I was assured it was amply sufficient to support even two men in the water—I most sedulously avoided joining my messmates in any of their excursions. I was considered quiet and shy; but, in general, I believe, I was rather liked than otherwise—so my excuses were taken, and I was left to follow my own inclinations in peace. One day, when I was walking quietly by the side of the river, in considerable dread that some cows which were feeding in the meadow might be attracted by my coat, I came on a branch of the stream, forming a large water tank through the field; and over this, which was of considerable width, a plank laid

across acted as a bridge. As I was carefully stepping along this rickety pathway, I was arrested by the shouts of my regimental friends, who were amusing themselves, as the day was oppressively warm, by bathing in this secluded part of the river. I stopped on the plank, and watched their motions for some time, and I could not help envying them their courage in trusting themselves so carelessly as they did into the very deepest part of the stream. Not for all the wealth of India could I have prevailed on myself (guarded as I was with the sustaining belt, which I constantly wore) to have done the same. There was horror in the very thought; and I was going to continue my walk across the ditch, and retire from so dangerous a vicinity, when I was thrilled by a cry of agony from the water beneath where I stood. I looked down, and in the very mouth of the ditch of which I have spoken, I saw Jack Wharton, the liveliest and kindest-hearted of our set, evidently in the greatest danger. He had crept quietly under the sedges at the side, in order to come upon me by surprise; but unluckily, on arriving almost under the bridge, he was seized with the cramp in both legs. He looked up to me in the greatest despair.—"Save me, save me!" he cried in an agony—"Oh, save me!" and sunk below the water, apparently quite exhausted. A thousand thoughts rushed into my brain—I saw his head and pale brow, after coming up for a moment, go down a second time; a dimness fell upon my eyes, a faintness came over my spirit, and in the intensity of my apprehension I lost my balance, and fell into the hole where my poor friend was struggling. A little recalled to my recollection by the plunge, I grasped convulsively at the nearest object, and, supported by my belt, I made directly for the land. Instinctively I clambered up the bank, still clenching the object I had seized in the water. I just saw it was the arm of poor Wharton, and that I had saved him—when again my terrors overcame me, and I fainted.

When I recovered my senses, I was saluted with shouts of "Bravo, bravo!" Slowly I opened my eyes, and found myself surrounded by my friends; Wharton was still chafing my temples, and calling me his deliverer, and pouring forth the most profuse expressions of his gratitude. Though still shud-

dering at my narrow escape, I expressed in a few words my happiness at having been the instrument of his preservation; but I told him at the same time, with truth, that my exertions had scarcely been voluntary, and that as I was quite unable to swim, it was only overpowering necessity which obliged me to plunge into the river. The fame of this exploit soon spread through the somewhat contracted circle of the town of ——; my total ignorance of swimming enhanced the merit of my heroic contempt of danger, and for a week or two I was quite the lion of the parties in the neighbourhood. But my gallantry, as it was termed, had a more enduring memorial than the applauses of the beaux and belles of ——. The officers at that time in the depôt presented me with a handsome snuff-box, on which is an inscription, testifying their high opinion of my merit in plunging in, at the imminent risk of my life, to the assistance of a brother-officer. This box I of course still preserve, and although it is nearly thirty years since the adventure took place, I can scarcely now look on that complimentary testimony to my courage without a blush.

Young Wharton after that became the warmest of my friends; but in my intercourse with him, there was always on my side a feeling of embarrassment. My conscience would not allow me to accept the gratitude which he offered, and my pride would not allow me to confess to him the real circumstances of the case. This struggle within myself produced a coldness in my behaviour, and I saw that the boy was mortified and disappointed that his warm advances were so indifferently received. At length, though it was evident he longed for an opportunity to show his affection for his preserver, as he still thought and called me, he desisted from cultivating any greater intimacy than had previously subsisted between us. I was now considered among my friends a person whose courage was only equalled by his modesty; and an idea began to be spread that I was so reckless of life, in the pursuit of fame, that under the melancholy and quietness of a Jacques, I concealed the spirit and ambition of a Hotspur.

I shall not trouble you with the further details of our resi-

dence at ——, nor need I describe to you the terror which fell upon me with threefold force from the hopes I had fondly indulged of security, when a despatch came down for us to join our regiment, which was just ordered abroad. Our march was conducted without any remarkable occurrence, and in the highest possible order, with the steadiness and regularity of veteran campaigners; our new levies made a most imposing appearance when united for the first time to the main body of the regiment, upon parade. Forces had been collected from all quarters, and concentrated at Portsmouth. Our destination was not as yet known, and my fears were accordingly divided between the sabres of the French and the murderous rifles of the Yankees. We were detained for upwards of a fortnight by contrary winds, and I confess to you that my prayers were most fervent and sincere, that the weathercock might never change its direction. At last, however, a calm succeeded to the tempest which had restrained us so long; the transports were anchored as near to the shore as possible, and on the 17th day of ——, in the year ——, for I love to be particular in my dates, I bade adieu to the shores of England. The voyage left me ample time for serious reflection. I was conscious of my own utter cowardice; I was aware that on the very first occasion of danger I should disgrace myself; and I need scarcely inform you that my spirits, naturally placid, were by no means elevated by the contemplation of my future prospects. The mirth of my companions grated harshly on my ears. I could scarcely believe that their anxiety to meet the enemy was not feigned; and yet, disagreeable as the passage was, I could never persuade myself to wish for its conclusion. Our destination we now found was ——. The enemy were known to have made every preparation for our approach, and even the bravest of my messmates, though they were never doubtful for a moment of ultimate success, expressed their anticipations of tremendous loss in forcing our way to land. The night before we expected to come to an anchor, my forebodings of evil would not allow me to rest in my cot; I therefore went on deck, and leant despondingly against the mast. The moon was high in heaven, groups of soldiers

were lying on the boards, apparently asleep, and the only moving objects on the scene were the few sailors attending to the necessary operations of the vessel. With a sort of desperate resolution, I had determined to rush upon death, and put an end to my tormenting fears at once. I had summoned to my aid all that I had ever heard or read of heroic achievement, and having thus made up my mind for the worst that could befall me, I sunk into a state of calm and almost self-devoting despair. I was interrupted in my reverie by a voice at my side—"Pumpkin!" it said, "what a glorious moon!" I turned round, and saw young Wharton gazing intently upon the bright planet; and in my life I think I never saw so beautiful an expression in any one's face as at that moment in his. Languidly I looked upwards to the same object, and said in a low and subsided whisper, "Yes, very."—"Why, you seem in low spirits, considering the noble prospect we have before us."

Never, you will believe me, could it enter into my calculations, that any one would describe the hateful certainty of going into battle as a noble prospect. I accordingly thought he was expressing his admiration of the scenery.

"Such contemplations," I said, "are by no means calculated to raise the spirits. There is something so awful and sublime in the motions of the mighty host now marshalled in such beautiful array within our view, that the mind sinks under it, and admiration is strongly mingled with awe."

"That may be the case," he replied, "to a philosopher; but I never knew any thing of philosophy, and never shall. All that I know or care for is this—that all our operations are regulated by the commander-in-chief; obedience is all we can give, and if you and I are lucky, we shall perhaps be captains within the week."

This soon recalled me to the horrors of my situation—I painted to myself the contempt with which every one, even the warm-hearted boy who looked to me now with admiration and esteem, would regard me after to-morrow's fight. My dogged resolution, prompted by my despair, almost gave way, and I was undecided whether or not it would be better to ease my conscience by confessing the truth to my friend,

and rushing at once upon the disclosure which every hour became more hideous to me by delay. That it was inevitable, I did not doubt. I had no high feeling to support me, and I would gladly have exchanged honour, hopes, and reputation, for safety and oblivion. If I could have instantly got to a distance after the confession, I should not have put it off one moment,—but to be pointed at, jeered, laughed at, ridiculed, spurned, despised,—it was too much,—and I resolved to wait patiently the course of events, and not precipitate my disgrace by a premature discovery.

"We shall have bloody work of it at all events, and a glorious victory, whoever lives to see it. We shall first have to stand the fire of all the batteries in going ashore; and after we land, we shall be attacked by the whole army of the enemy drawn up on the coast,—bullets will be as plentiful as peas in August, and our regiment will have its full share, as we shall most likely be pushed first to land."

"Indeed?" I said,—as you may imagine, with no diminution of my dislike to honourable service,—"that arrangement strikes me to be very unfair. The rest of the troops"——

"Spoken like yourself: you are always so kind and considerate—why, it may be their turn next time, and they should not grumble if we step for once before them into the field of glory."

"Oh no, I have no doubt they don't envy our situation in the least. For my own part, if I were in their place"——

"You would be in a devil of a passion at being kept behind—But, however, I expect great things from you to-morrow. I shall be very happy if I can only follow your example. The eyes of the whole regiment are upon you, and all of us expect something quite out of the way."

"They will most probably not be disappointed," I said, with a bitter consciousness.—"I have no doubt they will see many things to amaze them."

"How? have you fixed on any plan? That you will distinguish yourself, I have no doubt; but if in doing so you require the assistance of another, my sword, my life, which I owe to your intrepidity, is at your service."

My feelings became bitterer and more irritable every instant that our conference lasted. I hated the brave young fellow who thus offered every thing in his power to aid my reputation; for you may be sure your true coward hates no man for any thing so much as for his courage. While I was musing on the difference between our dispositions, he again asked me most earnestly by what means I hoped to render myself distinguished? Worked into a state of frenzy by this harping on what was to me the most disagreeable subject in the world; hating the army, him, myself, and all the universe, I grasped him by the arm, and said, slowly and distinctly—"By exposing myself! Mark my words, and remember what I have told you."

Having made this confession, I let his arm go; and as I slowly turned away to hide my agony and humiliation, instead of his eyes being turned on me with the contempt I deserved, they were fixed with a look of generous enthusiasm.

"For God's sake," he whispered, "do not expose yourself too much; but wherever you are, I shall be at your side. God bless you—good-night."

Day came at length, and land was descried at the distance of less than twenty miles. Expectation was raised to the utmost height. Officers were busied in all parts of the vessel gazing intently through their telescopes. For myself, I felt no curiosity. I knew that all places were alike to me, and I remained amidst that busy and inspiring scene in apathy and silence. Every minute revealed to us more distinctly the features of the shore. An abrupt hill, at a little distance from the sea, thickly studded with trees and brushwood, was crowned by a battery apparently of considerable size. To the right of this a thickly-wooded district stretched out as far as the eye could reach, while on the left a level country was spread to an immense extent, and admirably adapted for the manœuvres of an army. The object of our chiefs, we could easily divine, would be to seize the commanding height, and we could not doubt that so important a station would be defended to the last. Exclamations of joy and delight burst from the gazers as the scene gradually unfolded its beauties. The height was evidently manned by a very strong detach-

ment, while large masses of infantry were distinguishable on the plain. To an unprejudiced eye the *coup-d'œil* would have been wonderfully striking, while no inconsiderable part of the beauty of the prospect would have been derived from the transports and ships of war covering the whole sea with a white cloud of canvass. Every heart except my own bounded with animation! but, alas! with me the sensation was only of increased misery and despondence.

Two frigates were sent forward to demolish the battery, and cover the landing of the troops. How nobly this service was performed it is needless for me to mention—the noise of the cannon sunk *me* into tenfold confusion; the smoke rose in dense wreaths, and under cover of the bombardment, the boats pushed to land. Of my own behaviour, I can give you no account. Listening only to the thunder of the artillery, thinking, I suppose, of nothing, but in a state of complete torpor and bewilderment, I took my station in the boat. We soon found ourselves drawn up on the shore; and a shout, which for a moment drowned the roaring of the guns, showed the enthusiasm of our men, and the success of our enterprise.

Mechanically I marched along with the others—rushed up the hillock of which I have spoken, and after a *mêlée* mingled with many horrid sounds, half-maddened with groans, shrieks, shoutings, and exclamations of every tone and nature, I found myself alone. Awakened a little from my amazement, by this appalling discovery, I looked around me. Our troops had pushed most gallantly up the hill, but just as some of the foremost had crowned it, a large reinforcement of the enemy met them at the top, and by overwhelming numbers, repulsed us with incredible slaughter. How it occurred I have never been able to guess—but alone, on the hostile side of the hillock, cut off from our own forces, the bravest might have been excused for giving himself up for lost. I saw no possibility of escape, unless by concealing myself in the thicket to the right, and I accordingly directed my course to the nearest clump. Suddenly the earth was shaken beneath my feet, and on looking round to the place from which the noise proceeded, I saw a charge of our own cavalry, which had deployed round the base of the height, upon a regiment

of the enemy's light horse, stationed under its cover. The fate of the attack was not long doubtful. The enemy began to waver, and in a short time a complete rout took place. Horses in great numbers, wild and unmanageable, rushed past me on every side. In momentary expectation of being cleft by some retreating horseman, or trodden to death by the hoofs of his charger, I shrieked and holloed, but luckily the enemy were generally more frightened than myself.

In the despair of the moment, although from my childhood in the utmost terror of trusting myself on horseback, I determined, as the only chance of avoiding being ridden over, to seize some masterless charger, and trust to good fortune for the rest. I luckily soon caught one as it galloped past me, and climbed into the saddle. In an instant the horse continued its flight, and badly as at all times I rode, and half delirious as I was with alarm, I rejoiced to see that its speed would soon get me out of the crowd. Intently anxious to preserve my seat, I clung with desperate energy to the mane, and unfortunately my sword, which I still retained in my hand, was jerked by the tossing of my career against my face, and inflicted this ghastly wound, of which you see the mark upon my brow. My horse with untired speed continued its flight, and was evidently gaining rapidly upon those who had fled before. In particular, I saw I was following exactly in the track of an old officer, evidently of distinction, whose horse gave tokens of fatigue. The blood, I perceived, was trickling from several wounds it had received, and I began to be dreadfully alarmed that its rider, when I should overtake him, would blow out my brains with the pistols at his holsters. In this state I managed to catch hold of the reins, but, alas! I found that I had little power in reducing my horse's speed. Just, however, as I got up with the officer I so much dreaded, I succeeded in checking my terrified animal, and assumed something approaching to an upright seat. The officer, seeing me at his side, and recognising the English uniform, pulled up his horse at the same time. "The fortune of war is yours," he said;—"I yield myself prisoner." Saying this, he bowed, and presented me with his sword. Bewildered with the whole adventure, and scarcely believing the reality of my

safety, I bowed in return, and took advantage of the stop to which my horse had come to turn him round in hopes of rejoining our own forces. My prisoner, who was wounded and fatigued, rode dejectedly at my side. I confess I was under considerable alarm lest he should retract his surrender, and perhaps turn the tables upon his captor. But luckily he entertained no such idea. Our cavalry had gone on in pursuit of the main body of the fugitives, and we still saw them, though at a great distance, furiously engaged. Of the fate of the battery and forces on the hillock, I was of course ignorant, and was in prodigious alarm lest I should fall into the enemy's hands before rejoining our army on the beach. My fears, however, were vain. On rounding the eminence, still accompanied by my prisoner, we found ourselves in presence of the victorious British force. My face being covered with clotted gore, and being altogether excited by my terrors to a degree of fever, my appearance must have created some surprise among our troops. By good fortune I rode up to the station of my own regiment, where I had been long given up for lost. The joy of my companions was warmly and loudly expressed, and I soon was observed by the general, who happened at that moment to be passing along the line. His acute eye saw immediately how affairs were placed. He called me to him, enquired my name and rank, and complimented me highly on my behaviour. My prisoner, in order I suppose to account for his own surrender, related some wonderful instances of my valour; and his rank being no less than lieutenant-general of the enemy, added no little reputation to my exploit. The issue of this battle, so far as I am concerned, is soon told. I was raised to a captaincy on the spot, and sent home with the despatches. In the general's account of the engagement, the following passage occurred:—"Allow me also to recommend to your notice Captain Frizzle Pumpkin, the bearer of this despatch. Throughout the affair his conduct was the admiration of the whole army. Alone, and surrounded by the enemy, he dismounted a trooper, sprung on his charger, and succeeded, in the face of his own forces, in capturing and securing Lieutenant-General the Baron de ——. I consider myself indebted to his calm, yet daring

courage, for raising the spirits of the troops to the highest pitch of enthusiasm; and I regret it is not in my power to bestow on him a reward adequate to his transcendant merits."

CHAPTER II.

You will not be surprised if I inform you, that after this recommendation from the general, I was received by the authorities at home with the highest consideration. I was courted and caressed as if I had been a perfect hero of romance. Among those who extended their patronage to me in the kindest and most gratifying manner, was the gallant old Marquis of Hardbottle. During my stay in England, which was limited to three weeks, I was almost a constant guest at his table. His family circle consisted at that time—as his sons were both abroad—of two lovely daughters; indeed, I may say, that at the period I speak of, now eight-and-twenty years ago, they were the most beautiful and fascinating women I had ever seen. Perhaps you may imagine that the superiority of their rank had something to do in bringing me to this judgment of their charms; but circumstances have since occurred, which, in my eyes at least, have deprived them of that superiority, and my opinion remains unchanged. Of the two, the Lady Annabella was my favourite. There was so much playful ease, at the same time so much delicate propriety, in whatever she said or did, that, while she immediately attracted the affection, she as surely retained the admiration and esteem.

In this family I passed the happiest hours of my life. There was but one drawback to my felicity. The marquis was an officer of the old school, and, next to being unflinching in the field, he ranked among the soldier's virtues the being unflinching over the bottle. He attached such importance to this accomplishment, that I plainly saw he estimated

a man's courage and strength of nerve, in the exact ratio of his strength of stomach. To this failing of his lordship I made myself a martyr. In spite of my wound, which was now indeed nearly well, I felt myself irresistibly called upon to drink. Whether or not my behaviour in this respect was influenced by the marquis's declaration, that he would consider it a personal insult for any gentleman to leave his table in a condition which enabled him to walk, I will not say—but his lordship was known to be an inimitable shot, and, on occasions of that sort, seldom to be worse than his word. My mornings were happy,—or, if unhappy, only disturbed by my fears of the evening's debauch.

The drawing-room, and the fascinating society of the ladies, you will perhaps imagine, were a sufficient compensation for any sufferings. With me, indeed, it was so. Every time I was admitted into their presence, I found the Lady Annabella's influence gaining the ascendancy over my heart. I do not mean that the conquest she made of my affections was the result of her arts, or even her wishes.—Far from it. I saw, that even if fortune favoured me in future, as much as she had hitherto done, ay, if I raised myself to an equal rank with the object of my admiration, my suit would still be hopeless,—for, though I perceived that her heart was untouched, I knew, alas! that her hand was engaged. The Honourable Henry Fitz D'Angle, heir to an immense fortune and a dukedom, was her affianced husband, and I have often thought, since the period I mention, that it was little less than madness to yield to the delicious enchantment of those interviews and conversations, when I was aware that I was only nursing a flame, which, in all probability, would consume me. However, I found resistance to my passion impossible, and heart and soul, I gave myself up to the lovely and accomplished Lady Annabella. Our mornings were often employed in shopping: on these occasions, the marchioness, out of consideration for my wound, allowed me a seat beside her in the carriage. Fitz D'Angle, who, though an intolerable puppy, was handsome in person, and a perfect horseman, usually accompanied us on a spirited Arabian. I shall not say, when, in order to show his seat, he made the animal rear

in the most terrific manner, how certain tremors ran through my heart, as I sat in momentary expectation that the charger, in its descent, would put its iron foot through the carriage window, and demolish my unfortunate head. I remarked, that during these displays the lovely cheek of Lady Annabella never underwent the slightest change; and I confess, that without allowing myself to enquire into the cause, I rejoiced in perceiving her indifference. I shall not trouble you with lengthened details of the progress of my affection. You will imagine for yourself the effects which beauty and artless condescension naturally produced; and at the end of a fortnight, I was madly, miserably in love.

In the mean time, my favour with the marquis continued undiminished. The opinion he first entertained of me luckily made him blind to any little appearances of so unheroical a feeling as fright; and the respect with which I treated so choleric and unrivalled a shot, was attributed to the deference I felt myself called upon to pay to his experience and fame. The hospitable orgies after dinner continued as immoderately as ever, and to me the most provoking part of the marquis's peculiarity was, that no quantity of wine, however large, had the slightest effect upon his brain. Hour after hour, bottle after bottle, passed away—aid-de-camp after aid-de-camp dropt peacefully under the table, and still his lordship sat with his head as clear, and his eye as steady as ever, relating to us—those of us who could listen—the military and bacchanalian achievements of his youth, and ever and anon reminding us of our neglect, if the bottle by any chance hesitated for a moment in its rapid unvarying round. After a succession of these parties had accustomed us to each other, he addressed me one evening in the most friendly and confidential manner. "Pumpkin, I have a proposal to make to you." I bowed, and waited in expectation. "You see," he continued,——"Hillo, Jack Hardy, are you going to keep the claret all night?—My aids-de-camp have a very merry life—a very merry life!—Help yourself, Pumpkin—but somehow or other, I can't account for it at all—it is a very short one. About five months, I think, is the average.—Burton, how long has Pilpay been on the staff?"

"Three months, my lord," said Burton, "and two days."

"Is he going soon?"

"Not very, my lord. He'll be good for another fortnight. He'll see out the present case of liqueurs; but that's all."

"I feared as much: his hand has been unsteady in the morning since our week with the Enniskillens."

His lordship paused for a little, and I was in hopes the conversation was at an end; but he turned to me, and said, with the kindest air in the world, "There will be a vacancy, Captain Pumpkin, in my staff in the course of ten days or a fortnight. I fear by that time Pilpay's last glass will be drained, and I need not tell you how I shall be delighted if you will supply his place."

"Is Captain Pilpay, then, my lord, about to exchange?"

"Ay," said his lordship, "this world for a better, I hope —He was always a poor drinker—Will you pass the wine? —something went wrong with him, and he sunk from four bottles a-night to a paltry couple, so we can scarcely expect him to recover.—You will consider my proposal, and let me have your answer to-morrow. In the mean time, fill a bumper; for Burton, I see, is waiting for the wine." It was a death-blow to my happiness! I looked at his lordship (who was smiling with the most friendly and benignant expression) as if he had been an assassin. What! after I had escaped the horrors of an engagement, was I to be murdered by a lingering death of three months and two days, under the pretence of hospitality and kindness? Better, far better, if I had died at the first view of the enemy; and, alas! I found it equally dangerous to decline the intended honour. There was no saying in what light his lordship might view my refusal. Tormented by these thoughts, the conversation around me passed unnoticed. I only saw before me a collection of murderers, and considered myself the victim of an atrocious conspiracy. I drank and drank, and, strange as it may appear, the wine had less effect upon me than usual. The floods of most excellent claret seemed to fall cold upon my heart; and I sat quiet and unmoved, as if the exhilarating agency of the wine were entirely locked up for a season. The marquis himself, I saw, or thought I saw, began to lose his usual

steadiness; Burton seemed transformed into the red bronze statue of an ancient Bacchus, and I felt that I myself was the only perfectly unchanged and sober being in the room. Suddenly, however, there was a change. The wine, which had apparently been checked in its effects by the appalling communication of my being doomed to a certain and ignominious death, now rushed with the fury of a pent-up torrent into my brain, and, in a moment, I heard strange sounds, as of a battery of a thousand guns stunning my ears; troops of blood-stained soldiers, beyond all number numberless, seemed to mingle in the death-struggle before my eyes, and again the feelings of intensest fear took possession of my being; I shrieked and yelled like a maniac, as if in the midst of a tremendous *mêlée*, and faintly crying out—the only piece of Latin I had brought with me from school—"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori," I fell exhausted among the aides-de-camp and bottles which were huddled together under the table. Before, however, sinking into entire oblivion, I heard his lordship say, in a tone of admiration, to Burton, "The ruling passion strong in death. If he survives for six months, that fellow will die a field-marshal—Pass the bottle."

When I awoke to a consciousness of my situation next morning, I found my feelings of apprehension by no means removed. No way of escape from the dreaded advancement presented itself to my ingenuity; and at length, with the recklessness of despair, I resolved to abide the chances; and sincerely did I pray, as you will readily believe, for the speedy and complete recovery of the unfortunate Pilpay. I presented myself to the marchioness. Heavens! thought I, are the ladies also in the diabolical plot upon my life?—They congratulated me on the prospect of a prolonged acquaintance, and expressed, in the kindest terms, the interest they took in my future prospects. Gracious powers! can such cold-hearted beings assume the appearance of so much cordiality and friendship? In three months and two days my earthly career would inevitably be finished, and they talked to me about my future prospects!!—Hypocrites!—I turned towards the Lady Annabella, who had not yet spoken. She held out her hand to me as I advanced. I took it, and bent

over it, almost fearing to hear the sound of her voice, lest it should be in the tone of congratulation,—but she said nothing —and in silence, and with a feeling of increased devotion, I bowed again, and let go her hand. That hour finally and for ever sealed my fate; it also, strange as it may appear,—for in spite of my natural timidity, I am somewhat sanguine in my temperament,—gave me hopes of ultimate success; and resolving to set every thing—you will forgive the pun—on the hazard of a die, I announced to the marquis that I was prepared to succeed Captain Pilpay, in case of his decease.

There seemed now to be established a secret understanding between Lady Annabella and myself. It was friendship, delicate, considerate friendship, on her part, and yet it was so uniform, and so evidently springing from the heart, that it was fully equal in tenderness and strength to many an ordinary-minded woman's love. Fitz D'Angle continued his visits regularly: but, I suppose from some undefined feeling of rivalry, there was a mutual dislike between us. I envied him, indeed, his situation, as acknowledged suitor to the most beautiful and fascinating of her sex; but jealousy itself could see no cause for regret in the manner in which he was treated by his mistress. Cold, formal, and apparently unfeeling, she scarcely seemed the same being when conversing with the conceited coxcomb, whom her family, and not herself, had chosen for her lord; and often I have seen her eyes wandering with the most listless expression, during his "bald disjointed chat," and then suddenly fill, even to overflowing, with tears!—Gods! if I could have summoned one ounce of the courage of a man, I would have challenged the cold-hearted puppy, and freed the angelic mourner from his persecution. But no! I made the attempt to rouse my indignation in vain. Though my life, I knew, was limited to but three months and two days, I would not risk even that minute fraction of existence against the contemptible destroyer of my happiness.

I pass over the first week or two of my duty as aide-de-camp to the marquis—for Pilpay, to my infinite dismay and astonishment, died on the very day the liqueur case was emptied. I pass over my fears at night, my enjoyments in

the morning, and will tell you an incident which occurred when my span of life was reduced to only two months and sixteen days :—At that time there was a magnificent review in Hyde Park. The marquis, with the whole of his glittering staff, proceeded to the ground. I must tell you, that at that period my horses—the quietest and gentlest animals I could procure—were, unfortunately, unfit for service, and Fitz D'Angle, who had remarked, and, as I suspected, ridiculed my inefficient horsemanship, had spitefully, and, I firmly believe, with the purpose of getting me murdered, pressed me to make use of that very Arabian which had so frequently terrified me even with my hated rival upon its back. Afraid to accept his offer, and not knowing how to refuse, I mounted it in an agony of apprehension, and accompanied the marquis, who luckily went at a foot-pace to the field. The ladies, it was arranged, were to be driven by Fitz D'Angle, in his splendid new barouche ; for among that individual's other acquirements, his skill as a charioteer was not the least remarkable. The day was uncommonly fine, and thousands of the gayest and loveliest in the land were assembled to watch our manœuvres—and yet, as I rode slowly along that glittering line of rank and beauty, terrified as I was at the hideous danger of my situation on such a demoniacal horse, I took a sort of pride in reflecting that there were no eyes so bright, no lips so lovely, as those of that radiant creature on whom I—a poltroon and a coward—had dared to fix my affection. The marquis, in the mean time, slowly continued his course, laughing and talking with his staff in the gayest humour imaginable. All his jokes—"and many a joke had he"—fell unmarked upon my ear ;—at last, after looking at me for some time, during which I was afraid he was guessing a great deal too near the truth, he said, "How silent you are, Pumpkin—ha! but I see how it is—you fire-eaters hate such a bloodless show as this—you must rein in, man, you must rein in." At this time the animal I was on began to show sundry signs of impatience, and bounced about in a manner which added in no slight degree to my uneasiness, and as only the last words of the marquis reached me distinctly, I said, "Rein in? How can I, my lord, on such a prancing

devil as this?" For the first time in my life I was taken for a wit. The laughter at this sally, as it was called, was long and loud, and I had the reputation of being as gay as my companions, when there was not a single individual in the crowd safely on his own legs, with whom at that moment I would not gladly have changed places. At last the evolutions began, and as the troops filed and counter-marched, advanced in double quick to the charge, and went through all the movements of a desperate and well-contested battle, my horse and myself seemed to lose our senses almost at the same moment—but from very different causes. It danced, it capered, it reared, it curveted, and till this hour it is a mystery to me how I retained my seat. I can only attribute it to a total inaction on my part. Passive as a lump of inanimate matter, I was probably balanced by my length of limb; but certain it is, that for a considerable time I attracted no particular observation. At last, as the artillery began to peal, there was a considerable movement among many of the horses on the ground which were unacquainted with the noise; amongst the rest my horse fairly got the command. He rushed with the speed of lightning from the group, where he had hitherto remained, and carried me, by this time almost unconscious of my situation, straight towards the artillery; by some means or other I still maintained my seat, and by a lucky twitch of the bridle, I turned him from coming into contact with the cannon. At that moment I saw coming towards me a barouche at a fearful rate; the driver, whom even in the agony of that moment I recognised as Fitz D'Angle, had lost all mastery over his horses, which were evidently hurrying on to destruction; I heard a scream louder and louder as I approached, and at length, with hands clenched in despair, and eyes shut in the overwhelming misery of approaching death, I felt a shock—I heard one wild shout of exultation from the multitudes on every side, and sunk insensible, I knew not where. When I came to myself, the old marquis was bending over me with tears in his eyes—"Bless you, bless you," said the old man, as he saw I had in some degree recovered my consciousness, "you are the preserver of every thing I hold dear." With my usual prudence

I remained perfectly silent, till I could gather something of what had occurred. On looking round, I saw at a little distance the cause of all my misery, the Arabian charger, lying dead; but the barouche, the ladies, and Fitz D'Angle, had totally disappeared. On getting up, I found myself only slightly bruised, with the exception of a considerable wound on my head. My cap had fallen off, and on putting my hand up to the spot of greatest pain, I found the blood issuing in rather a copious stream. I was shortly afterwards put into a carriage, and taken immediately to the residence of the marquis. On arriving there, no words can paint the kindness with which I was received; the thanks of the marchioness and the Lady Julia were perfectly embarrassing, especially as I was ignorant of the precise manner in which I had deserved them. His lordship, who had hurried as fast as possible from the review, now rushed in, and again, with his eyes overflowing with tears, seized me by both hands, and thanked me for my heroic devotion in the service of his family. "'Twas beautiful! My God! how you spanked off when you saw their danger! and that puppy Fitz D'Angle, too; aye, my boy, you served him quite right—you've floored him, nose, teeth, mustaches, and all—he'll never be able to smile and simper again as long as he lives."

"I hope, my lord," said I, "Mr Fitz D'Angle is not much hurt?"

"How the devil can you hope any such thing? The fellow would have murdered my wife and children with his confounded folly, if you had not arrested him just in time. 'Gad, you flew from your saddle with the force of a Congreve rocket, and dashed your head right into his face, bent him back as limber as an empty havresack across the coach-box, and knocked three of his teeth down his throat, besides one that was picked up afterwards from his waistcoat pocket. You've killed his horse, though, and that was perhaps the most valuable animal of the two."

I now began to see how matters had occurred, and as I was very slightly hurt, I waited with some impatience for the approach of the Lady Annabella. All that day she never made her appearance. She sent frequently down to enquire

if I was hurt, and my hopes, both by her non-appearance and by the manner in which the marquis spoke of Fitz D'Angle, were raised to the highest pitch. That evening the marquis himself excused me from all participation in their revels; and next morning—how shall I describe the scene!—the Lady Annabella met me in the breakfast parlour alone; she blushed in the most embarrassed manner, as, in a faltering voice, she offered me her thanks.

"Nothing," she said, "could be sufficient to show her gratitude to her preserver—thanks were a very inadequate expression of what she felt."

"Believe me, Lady Annabella," I said, "I do not deserve such thanks. I was run away with at the moment,—I lost all command of—of"—

"Of your generous feelings," she interrupted, "when you saw us—I shudder at the recollection—hurried on to inevitable destruction."

I said no more; my attempts at fair dealing and ingenuousness were turned off by the grateful heart of that beautiful girl,—and on that day, in that hour, I ventured—to declare my passion; and as I saw a silent and blushing consent yielded to my suit, I caught her in my arms, trembling with emotion, and imprinted the first rapturous kiss on the red ruby lips of the present Lady Pumpkin.

Mr Fitz D'Angle, I must tell you, had been dismissed the day before, and in no courteous terms, by the choleric old marquis; and this measure of her father, you may readily suppose from what I have told you, was by no means an unpleasant event to the Lady Annabella.

By the interest of the family, I was advanced rapidly in my profession, without drawing a sword—and the day which saw me colonel of the —— horse, also saw me the happiest of men, and son-in-law to the marquis.

CHAPTER III.

Blessed with a wife whose affection till this hour has been unvarying in every trial, I found myself more fondly attached to life and safety than before. I trembled at every order from the War-office, lest it should doom my regiment to the glories of foreign service; and, in fact, if I were to relate to you the whole pusillanimity of my feelings, you would scarcely believe that I managed so to conceal them as to escape observation and disgrace. This, however, I did. People are luckily very much in the habit of attaching the idea of heroism and courage to a long sword and feathers. There is no surer protection from bullying and insult than a military dress. I therefore hail as a brother coward, anxious to make up in appearance what he wants in reality, any one, who, in the piping times of peace, infests the coffee-room or the theatre, in the habiliments of war. His courage decreases in my estimation as his spurs are lengthened;—a braided surtout you may treat as cavalierly as you like—but if in addition to that the poltroon shelters his cowardice beneath a hat with a military cock, a regimental stock, and jingling spurs of inordinate longitude, you may very safely kick him on the slightest provocation without any chance of disagreeable consequences. I speak on this subject from experience. My uniform, I am convinced, stood sponsor on many occasions for my courage, and I remained undiscovered only because I was entirely unsuspected. Even my wife till this hour believes me to be a very lion in the pugnacity of my disposition. She talks of me as a volcano whose proper atmosphere is fire and smoke,—as a sort of dare-devil, to whom life affords no enjoyment equal to the opportunity of throwing it away; and absolutely, at this moment, is pining for the breaking out of a war, that I may be enabled, so she says, to revel in the delights of a campaign,—which, in my apprehension, is only another word for the expression in the litany of "battle, murder, and sudden death,"—to which petition,

by the by, I always (perhaps involuntarily) feel a peculiar glow of sincerity and devotion as I enunciate the response.

But I must get on with my story: My happiness was complete—my father-in-law continued his kindness—and from every member of his family I received tokens of the highest consideration. My rival, however, Fitz D'Angle, did not bear his disappointment with the equanimity which his apparent indifference had led me to expect. Whether he in any way suspected how matters were, I do not know, but he certainly, whenever circumstances brought us together, treated me with a coldness and hauteur which I felt very frequently approach to the limits of insult. I bore his behaviour with my usual calmness; for though I hated him, and was vexed beyond measure by the mode of conduct which he assumed towards me, yet fear predominated, and I cautiously abstained from giving offence, and laboured most assiduously to avoid the necessity of taking it. But in vain. One evening there was a large party at the distinguished old Countess of Fribbleton's. The whole suite of noble apartments was thrown open, and the company consisted of the *élite* of the society of London. I went along with my wife and the marquis; and as I never had any great predilection for entertainments of that kind, I retired to as quiet a situation as I could find, and looked with considerable interest on the glittering scene. At the period I mention, England was in arms against nearly all the world, and war was of course a very general subject of conversation. Amongst the company were many officers of distinction. In a short time a group of military men had gathered near the place where I sat, and discussed with great earnestness the movements of the contending armies. Upon several occasions my opinion was asked, and listened to, even by the grey-haired veterans of an hundred fights, with deference and respect. But Fitz D'Angle, who was one of the party, bore on his fine aristocratic features a sneer of haughty scorn, which I attempted in vain to avoid noticing. To every thing I said he made some frivolous or disparaging reply, till at last I evidently perceived that several of the auditors seemed surprised at my passive endurance of his impertinence. But the effort to sum-

mon courage to take the expected notice of his behaviour, was beyond my power; and I still submitted with outward calmness, though internally a victim to the mingled struggles of anger and fear. The marquis now joined the group, and I was in hopes his presence might act as a restraint on Fitz D'Angle. But that individual perceived he was very safe in the conduct he pursued; and again, when I was answering a question, which the celebrated Field-marshal Firespit did me the honour to propose to me, he contradicted me in one of my assertions, without any of the circumlocutions with which a gentleman generally softens the expression of a difference in opinion. I stopped short and looked him full in the face, and though at that moment I felt as uncomfortable as I had ever done in my life, not a muscle moved, not a nerve was shaken, and even the bold eye of Fitz D'Angle sank beneath the fixed but inexpressive look. My eye was literally dead,—it had absolutely divested itself of all meaning whatever, and in that instance it was a complete index to my mind. I was at that moment as perfectly without an idea of any sort or kind as a statue; I knew not whether, as the vulgar saying is, I stood on my head or my heels; and the silence produced by my lengthened gaze, added to my embarrassment. At last Fitz D'Angle recovered his self-possession, and said, "Colonel Pumpkin, will you be kind enough, sir, to explain the meaning of the look you have done me the honour to fix on me for the last few minutes?"

"My look, sir?" I said.

"Yes, your look; for allow me to tell you, that I permit no such rude and insulting stare to be fixed on me by a prince or peer, and far less by a *parvenu*."

Here I saw a slight opening for escape, and replied,—"Mr Fitz D'Angle, I wave on this occasion all discussions with respect to birth,—yours, I know, is lofty, mine I confess to be comparatively humble—but were our situations in that respect changed, depend on it I should scorn to cast any thing in your teeth"——

"Except your head!" continued the old marquis, who evidently enjoyed the scene.

Fitz D'Angle lost all patience upon this.—"Sir, your in-

famous conduct in inflicting such an injury on an unprepared man, is only equalled by your cowardly baseness in thus referring to it. I shall expect satisfaction."

"Stay, Mr Fitz D'Angle," I said, in a state of the highest alarm, "I shall do all I can to avoid a duel, which I have always dreaded more than almost any thing else; I shall fairly tell you how every thing occurred. I shall confess to you, once for all, that you have on many occasions showed much more courage than ever I possessed, and that I am anxious to avoid even the remotest chance of depriving your country of such valuable services as I doubt not you have often rendered her."

As I said these words, there was a concealed sort of smile went round the circle, and, darting on me a look of even greater rage than before, Fitz D'Angle turned away, and in a few minutes left the room. My confusion at this incident was unbounded. I felt there was no possibility of drawing back, that fight I must, and death and infamy presented themselves to my imagination in every hideous form.

The marquis slapped me on the shoulder,—"Gave it him well, my boy; cursed severe, though, on the little silken puppy.—Why, man, what service has he rendered? 'Gad, that was the best hit of all. Come, let's have a bottle or two of wine, it will steady your hand in the morning; you shall sleep at my house to-night, and we shall singe Mr Fitz's whiskers at peep of day. Come along." And away we went. As unconscious as a child, I followed the old warrior—arrived at his house—was seated at a table with half-a-dozen bottles before us, and had swallowed several bumpers, one after another, as fast as they could be poured out, before I recovered my senses enough to recollect the disagreeable scrape in which I was involved. When the whole scene recurred to my remembrance, I searched through every expression which I had uttered, to discover, if possible, some opportunity to retract or explain. But I could find no means whatever. What I had said in the alarm of the moment by way of soothing his irritation, had unfortunately increased it. I therefore endeavoured to make up my mind to undergo the risk of a meeting. I comforted myself with thinking of the

multitude of duels which are fought every year without being attended with bloodshed;—but then always at the end of a long list of these innocent encounters, came the appalling recollection of some horrible meeting where both the principals were killed, and this reduced me to the same state of apprehension as at first. In the midst of these disagreeable reflections, a gentleman was announced as coming from Mr Fitz D'Angle. Mechanically, I took the note which he presented me, read it, and gave it over to the marquis without saying a word. It was to the following effect:—

"Sir,—After the sneer at my want of service, and the implication against my courage in which you thought proper to indulge, by comparing it with the heroism which, I allow, you have on every occasion displayed, you will not be surprised at the course I have taken. My friend, Major Blood, will arrange every thing for as speedy a meeting as possible, with any gentleman you may choose to appoint. I remain, sir, your obedient servant, Henry Fitz D'Angle."

"'Fore George!" said the marquis, when he had read it, "this is capital—there is more in the younker than I gave him credit for. Pummy, my boy, leave the room for a few minutes, and Major Blood and I will settle the preliminaries; you shall soon come back, and we shall have a comfortable evening." Marvelling at the strange idea some people entertained of a comfortable evening, I did as I was desired; I heard from the adjoining room the low sound of their conversation, and sometimes I caught the quick short laugh of the marquis, from which I could perceive he was delighted with the whole adventure. In a short time I heard the major retire, and I resumed my seat by the side of the marquis.

"All right, my boy," he said when I went in; "Major Blood seems a pleasant gentlemanly man, and agreed to the shortest possible distance the moment I proposed it. Long pistols, six paces, fire at the dropping of the handkerchief, that's the short way of doing business; now fill your glass.—Shall you kill him the first fire?"

"Kill him? Good God! I hope not."

"That's a good, kind-hearted fellow! No, no, I should not like to see him altogether killed; but you shall have my own hair-triggers, the same that did for my poor friend Danby, in 72—and, egad, you must wing him; I should recommend the right arm, but of course in that you will please yourself.—Half-past five, Wimbledon Common.—Don't you think every thing most delightfully settled?"

"Oh, delightfully!" I said, without exactly understanding what the word meant, and drank off my wine with the coolest air in the world. My conversation, you will believe, was not very vivacious. Indeed there was no great occasion for me to speak at all; the marquis was in extravagantly high spirits, and told me several of his feats in the same way in his youth. He never for a moment seemed to doubt that I entered with great enjoyment into all his anecdotes—but, alas! my thoughts ran in a very different channel. I cannot say that the fear of death was the most powerful of my tormentors—the dread of disgrace was still greater. I felt almost certain that my secret could be kept no longer, that my nerve would at last give way, and I knew that the slightest tremor would betray me at once to so calm and quick-sighted a judge as the marquis. But the evening at last came to an end. The old man shook me very affectionately by the hand, before we separated for the night, and said, "Sleep soundly, my boy, it will do your aim good in the morning—what I like about you is your coolness—no boasting, no passion, all as composed as if you were only going to breakfast—you'll wing him to a certainty; so now good-night."

I shall not attempt any description of my thoughts when left to myself. Suffice it, that after a sleepless night I proceeded with the marquis in his barouche to the place of meeting. In a few minutes after our arrival, the opposite parties came upon the ground. I can scarcely go on with what followed, for at the time I was totally unconscious of every thing that occurred. My knowledge of it is derived from what was told me after it was over. We were placed opposite each other, at what I could not help even then considering a most appalling degree of propinquity; I looked as fixedly as I could at my opponent, but a mist of some sort or

other was spread before my eyes, and I could see merely the outline of his figure, though he was not farther from me than eighteen feet. The handkerchief dropped, I pulled the trigger, and stood in the exact attitude in which I had been placed by my second. There was a considerable bustle the moment after I had fired, but my faculties were so entranced by my fear and agitation, that I could not discover the cause of the disturbance. At last the marquis came up to me and whispered something or other, the import of which I did not exactly catch. I expected he would have put another pistol into my hand, but in this I was disappointed. Surprised at the delay, I said to him, "Is it all over?"

"No—I hope it is not over with him yet; but he is desperately wounded. Let us return to town, he has a surgeon with him. Egad, it was just in the place I told you—a little below the right shoulder.—Did not the trigger go easily?—Allons, allons."

Mr Fitz D'Angle recovered, and my fame was still farther increased. The marquis was in raptures with my calmness and self-possession, and even Major Blood and my antagonist bore testimony to the undaunted resolution and coolness of my behaviour. The duel made a considerable noise at the time, and various grounds were assigned for it; but all accounts agreed in stating that I was entirely free from blame, as I had avoided taking notice of the intentional disrespect of my opponent as long as I possibly could. It had even reached the ears of the most exalted personage in the realm, as I discovered the next time I presented myself at court. "Bad thing—bad thing, indeed—duel, duel, Colonel Pumpkin;—but couldn't help it—bore it long as you could.—Keep your bullets for the enemy next time, colonel;—we can't let you risk your life any more.—No duels—no more duels."

The war in which we were engaged assumed at this time a very critical appearance. Our allies had been vanquished in every battle, and considerable apprehensions were entertained of an invasion of our own shores. In order to guard against this, troops were stationed almost all along the coast, and I was appointed to the chief command of a very large district of country, and an amount of force of above seventy thousand

men. In this, I of course include the yeomanry and the militia. I was now major-general before I was eight-and-twenty years of age, a thing which, so far as I am aware, had at that time no parallel in the service. I fixed my head-quarters at ——, as being the point in my district most remote from the scene of danger, and kept a considerable force in my own immediate neighbourhood, in order to cover my escape, should the enemy succeed in effecting a landing. Whether it was that I pulled the reins of discipline too tight, or from some other cause, I do not pretend to decide, but in a short time I perceived that with the men under my command I was decidedly unpopular. My personal want of courage made me peculiarly strict in exacting the most rigorous attention to duty; and I have often summoned the poor fellows from their quarters at a moment's notice, in order to see what chance of safety I should have secured to myself in case of an actual surprise. All this, aided, I have no doubt, by other causes, produced the effect which I am now going to relate. In one of the regiments which I had retained near me, there were a great many men, I was sorry to be informed, who applied themselves more to political discussions than is usual in a British soldier. These were in the habit of reading several radical and disaffected publications, which were allowed, by the supineness of the government, to spread abroad their anti-national principles, even in that period of imminent danger to the state. This, in due course of time, had the effect which might have been expected. The officers exerted themselves in vain to bring back their men to cheerfulness and content; and though discipline was still preserved, and the forms of military subordination gone through, it was evident that the whole of that regiment waited only for an opportunity to show the Jacobin spirit with which they were possessed. To a man of the disposition which I have now confessed myself to be, you will have no difficulty in imagining the alarm which this state of things produced. I feared to send them to a distance, as I concluded my greatest safety rested in their being kept in awe by the vicinity of the other troops, and I was equally disinclined to allow them to remain, as I was afraid their rage, being restrained from an open manifes-

tation, might secretly wreak itself on so unpopular a commander as, under those circumstances, I undoubtedly was. The officers of my staff perceived my uneasiness, though none of them ventured to inquire into the cause. My usual calmness and taciturnity stood me in good stead. I never adverted to the subject of my alarm—I was afraid to let my mind rest upon it, and I felt convinced, if I trusted myself to converse on the matter at all, I should inevitably betray the unsoldierly extent of my trepidation. In this state of affairs time wore on. One day, when I dined with the regiment which caused these apprehensions, my fears were worked up to a pitch which I was almost certain must have betrayed me. After dinner a note was put into my hand, which I immediately guessed to contain some information connected with the subject of my alarm. I accordingly took an early opportunity of looking into it, and found it to contain the following words:—"If you leave the barracks to-night after half-past nine, you are a dead man. This is a friend's warning—neglect it not." I pulled out my watch in a moment—it wanted just ten minutes to ten. I gave myself up for lost. In what way could I invent an excuse for stopping in the barracks all night? How could I order out a guard to see me safe to my headquarters, when, in all probability, it would be composed of the very persons whom I was anxious to escape? I was uncertain what to do. I had thoughts of assuming the appearance of helpless intoxication, and picking up some other individual's hat and cloak by mistake, in hopes of deceiving my enemies by a change of costume; but there were insuperable objections to that mode of proceeding. I sat in a state of complete bewilderment and dismay. I thought it better to make my exit with as little bustle as possible, and I accordingly sent off my aid-de-camps on different messages, and at last, about half-past ten, took my leave of the party, and proceeded into the barrack-yard alone. I moved as quietly as I could, keeping carefully under the shadow of the walls, till, when I had got very nearly to the gate without interruption, I was startled by hearing a conversation carried on in whispers, a little in advance. The words were, of course, inaudible, though I paused and listened with

the utmost anxiety; but as the party were evidently advancing to where I stood, I slipt cautiously into an empty barrack-room on the ground floor, in hopes of letting them pass without attracting their observation. I placed myself, for the greater security, behind a large screen in a recess of the apartment, on which a number of soldiers' great-coats, and other articles of apparel, were suspended, and waited in the agonies of hope and fear, till I should hear their steps die away in the distance; but, to my horror and amazement, the persons, whoever they were, paused at the very door I had entered, and in a few moments I heard the subdued voices of many men, and was aware that they had come into the very room to which I had fled for safety. I heard a coarse rough voice say, "The tyrant stays late to-night—but it's his last dinner, he had better enjoy it as long as he can."—"Hush, hush," said another—"let us to business. You, Bill Halliday, watch and give us notice of his coming; and don't be so ready with your knife—you had nearly settled Captain Jenkins, the aid-de-camp, in mistake for the general himself; and now, comrades, let us renew our oath of secresy." He then called over the names of about eight persons, who answered severally as they were called; and the spokesman continued, "You swear to be firm and determined in the great object we have undertaken, to stab our tyrant, the general, through the heart this night; to set fire to the barracks immediately after, and prevent the officers' escape from the mess-room when it is in flames?"

"We swear!"

"And you also swear, whatever enquiries are made, whatever promises are held out, or whatever suspicions are entertained, never to divulge your knowledge of this plot, whichever of us proves lucky enough to free the regiment from such detestable tyrants."

"We swear!"

And the villains, by the light of a dark lantern, subscribed their names to a paper containing these horrible resolutions; and I heard, in my place of concealment, the scraping of the pen which thus doomed me to inevitable death. Need I tell you that every thing I had previously suffered was as nothing,

compared to the dreadful situation in which I was then placed! I have often wondered since that insanity was not produced by the intense horror of that appalling moment. The watch they had stationed at the door now came in, and informed them that their victim approached. In a moment they all rushed out of the room, and as it was by this time pitch-dark, I am ashamed to confess that a faint hope sprung up in my bosom that the desperadoes might mistake their object. I intended at one time to rush out with the crowd, in hopes of not being noticed in the hurry, but I had allowed the opportunity to pass. I, however, possessed myself of the paper they had left upon the table, and also of the lantern; and had scarcely time to resume my place of concealment when they returned into the room, and I gathered from their conversation that a captain's guard was marching up the quadrangle from the gate. I listened with the most painful suspense to the measured tramp of many men; they approached—they arrived opposite the window of the room. I heard the command given to halt; and, as my only chance of safety, I started up, and pushing over the screen behind which I had sheltered into the very midst of the conspirators, I rushed to the door, gained the outside, and in an instant informed the captain in command of my name and rank, and ordered him to guard the door; and, on pain of death, to suffer no one to escape. I now walked deliberately back into the dining-room, where the officers were still assembled, and ordered the major to go down to No. 4 of the right-hand side of the quadrangle, and to bring the men he found in that room before me, separately, and disarmed. I informed the astonished group of officers, that I had for some time suspected the disaffection of the regiment; I produced the paper with the signature of the conspirators attached, and you will readily suppose the horror and surprise of every one who listened to my story. This you have, no doubt, heard related in a very different manner. The newspapers, I remember, were full for several months of my intrepidity; and again, by a most curious concurrence of circumstances, I was declared to be a hero, when the fact was that —— but no matter; I have striven not to be a coward, but in vain. Public opinion about

this time was strongly expressed on the incapacity of our generals on foreign service, and there was almost an unanimous desire that they should be superseded. I need not inform you of the command to which, contrary to my wishes and expectations, I was soon after this appointed.

I was given to understand, on having my destination pointed out to me, that the loftiest expectations were entertained of my success, and the minister at war paid me the highest compliments on the courage and ability I had already displayed. The object of all these hopes and compliments—loaded with the good wishes of the whole nation—I declare to you, sir, that even then I found it impossible to summon the smallest resolution; I trembled as much as ever at the remotest appearance of danger; and while the thousands who cheered me enthusiastically as I stept on board a transport on my way to the scene of warfare, believed that my thoughts were proudly fixed on glory and ambition, alas! they were only directed to the appearance of the sea, which was a great deal more rough than suited my inclination. A thousand tales of shipwreck and suffering came vividly into my mind, and at every heave of the vessel I repented more and more intensely that I had not long ago confessed my weakness, and enjoyed safety on dry land, even although it should be accompanied with contempt. But it was my fate, and I submitted. Besides my staff, there went out with me in the transport a large portion of the —th regiment of foot. For several days our voyage was smooth and easy. Even I had in some degree recovered my usual spirits, and every thing seemed going on as favourably as we could wish. Towards evening, however, of the seventh day from our leaving the shores of England, a strange sail appeared at a considerable distance, and created some degree of alarm even among the hardy sailors. As night was closing in upon us fast, we were in hopes of avoiding her in the darkness; and, till the dawn again appeared, we made all the sail we could. By the first grey twilight of the morning, it was evident our hopes were fallacious. The ship had gained upon us in the night, and was crowding all her canvass to come up with us. A consultation was immediately held, and the master of our vessel

candidly told us, that should our pursuer prove to be an enemy, resistance was perfectly fruitless, as it was clear she was a frigate of the very largest class. I sat in silence and consternation; several of my officers advised our defending ourselves to the last—my own desire was to surrender on the first summons, and so save the effusion of blood. The frigate now drew near, and firing a gun across our bows, showed French colours. We kept all sail up, and made the best of our way. My fear now got the upper hand of my discretion, and I said to the master of the transport, "Trust to me on this occasion; I and the soldiers will go below—it will save many lives; yield as soon as you can; but for any sake let us get quickly under hatches." As I said this I ordered my soldiers down below, and slunk as quickly into the hold as I possibly could, as I felt certain the next gun would be fired upon us in earnest. I lay below in utter darkness for I suppose an hour, my apprehensions increasing with every minute. After so considerable a lapse of time, as I heard no more firing, and had perceived a great bustle upon the deck, I concluded that we were fairly captured, and were pursuing our way to the enemy's coast. The heat where I lay was oppressive; many of my men were huddled together, and there was beginning to be felt a great scarcity of fresh air. The hatches were down, but luckily not fixed. Unable any longer to bear the confinement, I said, "Now, my lads, let us get as quick as we can upon deck; if the enemy makes any show of violence, we'll assure them we were perfectly prepared to strike." These words, which I uttered in the most hopeless despondency, seemed to inspire my soldiers with the utmost courage. A universal shout was the only answer they vouchsafed, and in a moment the hatches were thrown up; several muskets were discharged—I heard the struggles of men upon the slippery deck, and ere I reached the scene of action eight Frenchmen lay dead, and about twelve others were driven forward into the poop, and were crying for quarter with the most frantic exclamations. When I appeared there was a general hurra; and being half bewildered with the suddenness of the whole transaction, I ordered the firing immediately to cease, and assured the Frenchmen of their safety

under my protection. The master, who had been confined in his cabin, now joined the group on deck, and assured me he had acted exactly according to my orders, though he could not have supposed so gallant an achievement would be the result of what he had done. Luckily none of our men were seriously hurt; and I heard an old serjeant, who had been near me in the hold, expatiating very warmly on my transcendent courage, and he concluded his panegyric by a compliment to my wit: "Says I to myself, says I, when we was all ordered below, what's young Thunderbolt [the soubriquet by which I was known in the ranks] arter now? Well, we lays down in that 'ere hole, and the general he never says nothin' at all, but sits as quiet and cool as if he was over a glass o' gin and water; thinks I to myself, this here will never do by no means whatsomnever; but then, ye see, he says, says he at last, just as if he was goin' into no danger at all, says he, hurrah, says he, we'll show them there Frenchmen how us Britons can strike; and I think as how he has struck 'em, poor devils, sore enough."

We pursued our way without any further molestation, and arrived at our destination in time to disembark the same evening. As I was, of course, in the greatest haste to join the main army, I considered myself lucky in procuring a conveyance in the town at which we landed; and accompanied by a single aid-de-camp, I set off for the neighbourhood of ———, in which our army was at that time encamped. Night came down upon us almost before we were aware; and just as we entered the range of mountains which skirts the province of ——, we were enveloped in total darkness. My companion, after several apologies for his drowsiness, resigned himself quietly to sleep. I was most anxious to follow his example, but I was aware the country was in a very lawless state, and my apprehensions of the brigands effectually drove off my slumbers. At every lurch in that execrable road, I feared it was some impediment thrown in our way, to enable the robbers to execute their purpose; and besides, my alarm was still more excited, as I knew it was no uncommon thing for the postilions themselves to be in league with the most ferocious of the banditti. Tormented with these thoughts, I

had no refreshing sleep, yet the motion of the carriage, and the coolness of the night air, joined to the fatigue of a long voyage, threw me every now and then into a disturbed sort of slumber, from which ever and anon I started up, terrified by the most appalling dreams. At last the worst of my fears seemed to stand a fair chance of being realised. The carriage all at once stood still, though it was now so dark that I could not see the cause of the delay. I heard, however, the tread of a horse, and in a moment after the window was let down, and some hard substance hit me a violent blow on the temple. Without premeditation, in the first natural effort of my fright, I laid firm hold of the assaulting object, and found it to be a pistol of enormous size, pointed directly to my head. With the eagerness of self-preservation, I turned it to a side, and grasped, with all the strength I could muster, the arm of the assailant. All this passed in silence. For myself, I was much too agitated to speak, and the person who attacked us maintained an equal reserve. I could at last only summon breath enough to say to the postilion, "Drive on, or you may expect instant death; and in a moment he put his horses into motion, while I still, rigidly but unconsciously, retained my hold of the arm of our antagonist. A groan, extorted from him by the agony of the first jerk, showed me that his arm was either very much strained, or perhaps broken, by coming in contact with the window of the carriage,—for I gave all my weight, and all my strength, which was at that time very remarkable, to retain my grasp. In order to ease his wounded limb as much as possible, he made his horse go close to our side; his groans at every tug were very distressing, and I doubt not, if I had been my own master at the time, my compassion would have induced me to let him go. But with the instinct of self-protection, I kept him close prisoner in spite of his manifest sufferings. Day broke while we were yet in these relative positions, and my companion was still sound asleep. At length we arrived at a village in the occupation of our troops, and the morning *réveillé* was just sounded as we drove up the narrow street. The robber was still by our side, his arm convulsively clutched by me from within; and as the carriage drew up where a regiment had taken its

station for parade, the amazement of the soldiers was visibly depicted on their countenances at so unusual a sight. My aid-de-camp at this time awakened, and I think his astonishment was one of the most amusing exhibitions I have ever seen. In few words I related how it had occurred, and he immediately jumped out and secured the unfortunate and now completely subdued depredator. When it was ascertained in the ranks who I was, and the story, with many embellishments, found its way among the men, their manifestations of delight could scarcely be controlled. The man was soon recognised to be a brigand of astonishing reputation, — second only in atrocity and fame to the celebrated Polinario. Many parties had been sent after him in pursuit, but he had hitherto eluded their search, or even sometimes ventured on a daring and successful resistance. He was therefore an object of no common curiosity, and the odd manner of his capture added in no small degree to the feeling. His arm, I found, was broken; and the agony of the pain seemed to have entirely mastered his spirit, for he never even attempted to release himself, and seemed only happy if by yielding his arm freely to the motions of the carriage, he could prevent any addition to his pangs. I was sorry that dire necessity exacted his life, but the gibbet was a punishment his cruelty and lawlessness had richly earned,— yet I was not altogether pleased with the noise my share in his capture made, as I was aware, among people of his class, it might incite his associates to revenge his loss upon the individual who caused it. However, it made me only the more strict in maintaining rigid discipline; and in a few months after my arrival I had brought the forces under my command to a state of military organization to which they had not previously been accustomed.

I need not engage your attention with a detail of my proceedings while I was attached to the grand army, and under the control of the supreme head. My fame then only increased as being a sharer of the laurels of the whole army; it was only when placed in an independent command, that fortune wove a chaplet for my own peculiar brows. In the spring of the year 18—, whilst our glorious chief was pursu-

ing his successes in the provinces of —— and ——, I was detached to the neighbourhood of ——, to watch the movements of the Duc de ——. This, you are aware, was one of the most distinguished of the "sons of the empire." He had, it is true, been out-manœuvred on one occasion by his Grace, but you must know, as a military man, that the excellence of his dispositions, and the orderliness of his retreat, amply redeemed what he had lost in professional reputation. Against him I was sent with a large though mixed force; and if even under the protection of the whole British army, I felt tormented with almost unceasing terror, you may guess what my feelings were on being given up to the fury of the Duc de —— by myself. The feelings of a Daniel on descending into the lion's den, if he had not been preternaturally endowed, must have borne a great resemblance to mine on undertaking this expedition. However, I submitted with my usual philosophy to what was unavoidable, and set out upon my march with "the pomp and circumstance of glorious war," though a victim all the time to the most fearful forebodings, and startled at the shadows of coming evil. On arriving in the vicinity of the enemy, I made it my first business to strengthen my own position as much as possible. For this purpose I formed lines, on a smaller scale indeed, but as similar as I could to those of Torres Vedras. Secure in my intrenchments, or, when I did move out, always cautious to leave a certainty of a retreat into them once more, I watched the enemy with more comfort, and a greater feeling of security, than I had experienced for many years. The foe seemed to be as cautious as myself; but my situation was infinitely to be preferred. I was well supplied with every sort of provision, my position was nearly impregnable, and the whole circumjacent country was commanded by the disposition of my troops. From day to day my courage waxed higher and higher, till at last, on seeing the enemy so long quiescent, I made no doubt that pusillanimity was the cause of their repose, and rejoiced, with a joy which I find it impossible to describe, that the Duc de—— was as great a coward as myself. Full of these hopes, I now on several occasions ventured beyond my lines to reconnoitre. But even at those times I did not by any means trust myself

with few attendants. I was generally accompanied by a large staff, and had my movements covered by several thousands of the troops. The enemy, on my first presenting myself in this manner, made demonstrations of active attack, upon which I immediately withdrew to my intrenchments, and was thankful I had for that time effected my escape. But when for several days I had repeated the same operation, they no longer showed any symptoms of opposition, but allowed me in peace and safety to go along the whole extent of their line, and did not seem to be incommoded by the movements of so considerable a force. When I had gone on in this manner for nearly three weeks (for I was delighted with the courage I had at last been able to assume), things quite unexpectedly took a different turn. A regiment of British cavalry, the Irish brigade, and a regiment of Caçadores, were the party appointed to cover my progress. They stayed, of course, at a considerable distance from my staff, but somewhat closer to the enemy, in order to intercept any force which might be sent against us. The enemy, I was surprised to see, had changed the disposition of his troops. He had drawn them closer to the hill on which my camp was placed, and formed them into a semicircle round its base. Accordingly, on reaching the end of their line, I found myself alarmingly near to the outposts of their right wing, and hastily turned my horse, in order to retire to my intrenchments. But, skirting the hill at a fearful pace, and making rapidly for the place where I stood, I saw a large body of the enemy's cavalry. In an instant I put spurs to my horse, and flew like the wind. I waved my hat for my escort to come to my assistance, and began utterly to despair, as I saw but small prospect of escape. At last I joined the forces, which were hurrying to my aid, and, still in terror and hopelessness, urged my horse to the very top of his speed. The cavalry dashed after me with the wildest impetuosity—and ere I could check my horse, he had breasted the hill, and we rushed, like a torrent of sword and plume, into the totally unprepared masses of the enemy's left wing. A prodigious slaughter immediately took place; I shut my eyes to the horrid sights I saw every where around me, and as I had no hopes of ever finding my way out of the *mêlée*,

unless supported by the whole army, I sent an aide-de-camp to the second in command, and ordered an immediate charge of the whole line. Down the gentle declivity of that hill rushed three-and-twenty thousand men, in double quick time.—I heard a tremendous volley, followed by a still more awful shout, and nature reeled before me. I saw no more, and sank, in a delirium of fear and horror, quite insensible upon the ground. The victory was by far the most complete that had been gained during the whole war—there were 8000 men killed, and 13,000 prisoners, besides an immense quantity of military stores taken. But the consequences of the battle were still more important. The enemy abandoned the whole province, and the impregnable fortress of —— immediately surrendered. I rejoiced, on recovering my senses, to find I had been wounded. I was shot through the arm, and the horse I rode was killed by a bayonet stab.

The whole glory of the victory was attributed to me. The plan of inducing the enemy to strengthen his right wing, and then leading the attack so instantaneously upon his weakened left, was considered one of the most illustrious incidents in the art of war; and I have blushed over and over again to hear it compared, in intricacy of plot and brilliancy of execution, to the Duke of Marlborough's celebrated passage of the causeway of Arleux, in which he outwitted the great Marshal Villars. The honours that were heaped upon me were quite overpowering. I received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, and was presented with the freedom of the city of London in a gold box. The gratitude of the Spanish nation knew no bounds. I was the theme of many of their songs; I was called in some of their ballads only inferior to the Cid; and in honour of me, by a delicate compliment of that highly chivalrous nation, a Pumpkin became a favourite dish at the tables of the highest of their nobility. In the mean time my wound gave me no small inconvenience; some of the minor nerves were lacerated, and afflicted me with intolerable pain. This joined to the continuance of my fears (for every new success seemed only to make me more timorous and apprehensive), preyed seriously upon my health. His grace wrote me a letter with his own hand, thanking me for the

assistance I had rendered him, and complimenting me on the ability I had displayed. This I perhaps prized more than any of the other honours; but, alas! what right can I advance to all these praises? Many a more courageous man than I am, I was well convinced, had been shot for the basest cowardice, —and yet!—I have really suffered more from the goadings of my conscience, and the reproaches of my own heart at my paltriness in remaining silent under so much unmerited eulogium, than I should have undergone had I boldly stated the truth, and consigned myself to infamy and security at once. Even now, however, it is not too late, and I find my heart relieved of an intolerable burden even by the confession I have now made to you.

But to proceed. The state of my health necessitated my return to England. I gave up my command, I may safely say, with far more pleasure than I had assumed it, and set out with great satisfaction on my homeward way. It was now the beginning of winter. The wind blew most tempestuously when I arrived upon the coast. This circumstance, added to the weakening effects of my wound, reduced me to a lower point of pusillanimity than I ever remember to have reached. In fact I was totally unmanned, and thought my only plan to avoid observation in going from the little boat on board the transport was to affect an utter insensibility, from the painfulness of my arm. I lay at the bottom of the boat, totally absorbed in the contemplation of my danger, and, luckily without any very manifest display of my cowardice, I got hoisted up on the deck of the transport; and although even she was tossed with fearful violence, I considered myself to be now in a place of comparative safety. I found myself unable to stand the atmosphere below; so with cloaks and other appliances I made a sort of couch upon the deck, and lay down upon it, overcome partly by my state of health, and partly by my fears. Opposite to me was laid another sufferer, though I was at first so occupied with my own wants, that I had no great time or inclination to scrutinize his features attentively; but even in the cursory glance I gave him, there was something in his appearance which reminded me of some one I had seen before. But he seemed

so wasted by disease, that even if I had been intimately acquainted, I knew I should have found it difficult to recognise him. For the first two days I thought he was quite deserted, but on the morning of the third, a beautiful little boy, about six or seven years of age, came up from below, where he had been detained by sickness, and watched his couch with the most tender affection. The weather had now in some degree moderated, though the swell, to one unaccustomed to the sea, was still very unpleasant. I got up and moved about a little, and entered into conversation with the little boy, who had attracted my observation. His father I did not disturb, as he looked so languid I was afraid he might be harassed and incommoded if I addressed him. I sat on the taffrel and spoke to the little boy, who, with all the wildness and fearlessness of youth, rejoiced in rambling and climbing all over the ship. My rank made no impression on him. He sat upon my knee, and admired my dress with the most confiding innocence; and I was delighted to encourage his familiarity. One morning, as I leant over the side in a violent qualm of sea-sickness, the little boy was amusing himself by climbing up one of the ropes which hung directly above where I stood. I cautioned him two or three times of the danger of his sport, but he still persisted in going, by his hands alone, as high up the rope as he could. I heard a slight scream, and the next moment was overwhelmed with a great weight, and was instantly overbalanced and driven into the sea. I have no recollection of anything more, except a strange thundering sound in my ears, and the flashing of red lights in my eyes. A boat was instantaneously put down, and I was picked up quite insensible; the boy also, who had caused the catastrophe by losing his hold and falling on my head, was saved from his perilous situation, and we were conveyed on board after our safety had been despaired of. When I came perfectly to myself, I found the invalid had been carried across the ship to the side of my couch, and there he lay with the intent eyes of earnest affection watching for my recovery. His boy was lying sound asleep in his arms. He said, when I opened my eyes—"This is the second time, general, I have been indebted to you more than I

shall ever be able to repay—first—for I see you do not in these wasted features recognise a friend of your youth—when you saved me in the bathing-ground at ——, when you were a simple ensign, and I, what I am now—a poor lieutenant.'

"Jack Wharton!" I said, in astonishment.

"The same—No one has rejoiced more in your rapid and brilliant progress than I have, though my own, I grieve to say, has been very different. But now this second time you have saved my boy, my poor little Frederick, and Jack Wharton can only thank you with his tears."

And poor Wharton wept like a child. I said nothing to all this, for I knew, even if I told him the truth, that my precipitation into the water was by no means voluntary, he would not have given credit to the statement; so I was forced passively to submit to the admiration of the whole crew for the heroism of the achievement, when the fact was that the child himself had knocked me over the side, and nearly been the cause of my death. My friend's had been the usual fate of military men—he stood all the dangers of several campaigns, and had risen no higher than lieutenant; I am happy, however, to say I had it in my power to be of essential service to him afterwards, and to-morrow, I believe, I shall have the honour of introducing you to Colonel Wharton. I may conclude the story of my professional progress by informing you, that in a short period after my arrival I was advanced to the highest step in the army save one, and that my sovereign was graciously pleased to confer on me the honour of a baronetcy, and the grand cross of the Bath, and that Parliament voted me money to purchase an estate, and settled two thousand a-year on my lineal representative for three generations.

This, sir, from the story you have heard, will afford you ground for moralizing. Here am I, a man of no strength of mind, a man of no personal courage, celebrated from one end of the kingdom to the other for the possession, in a peculiar degree, of both these qualities. I have risen to the summit of a soldier's ambition, and to the eye of philosophy I present as interesting a subject of contemplation as would be the elevation to the seals of a lawyer ignorant beyond measure

of the law, or the translation to such a see as Winchester, of a clergyman unendowed with either learning, or piety, or talents. That such an event never occurred in any profession but my own I would fain hope; but I trust that, while I thus unburden myself of a secret which has preyed on my conscience for many years, you will allow that, poor and contemptible as my conduct has in reality been, I have never added to my baseness by arrogance and pride. You now, I feel convinced, look on me with loathing and abhorrence; but, believe me, that whatever *your* feelings may be, mine are a thousand times more humiliating, a thousand times more bitter!

Here the general paused, and laid his head upon his hand —for my own part I did not know what to do. I did not at first believe a single word of what he said about his want of courage; but as he proceeded in his story, I began to think he could scarcely mean all that long rigmarole for a hoax, and accordingly I felt it impossible to offer him the slightest consolation. Whilst I was hesitating what to say, for the unfortunate general was now sobbing convulsively in the bitterness of his self-upbraiding, we were startled by the most horrific shrieks I ever heard, and above the clamour which immediately arose, we heard the cries of "Fire! fire!" and then the wildest ejaculations of "Help! help! save us! save us!" I darted with the speed of lightning to the door, but the whole passage was filled with smoke; I, however, as the only chance of escape (after telling the general, who sat still, lost apparently in grief, that no time was to be lost), sprang down the already blazing staircase, and providentially arrived safe. The heat and agitation, however, had been too much for me, and I sank in a swoon upon the grass the moment I reached the lawn. When I recovered my senses, the fire had made the most alarming progress. It burst in vivid wreaths out of almost all the windows, and the smoke, thickly eddying round the whole building, hid all the portions of it which were not actually in a blaze. The servants, and many country people from the neighbouring village, gazed at the progress of the devouring element in helpless consternation and

dismay. Many of them were in tears, and I heard them uttering the most heart-rending lamentations over the inevitable fate of their mistress. She had retired to her couch at an early hour, and the flames now totally enveloped the suite of apartments which she occupied. I made several attempts to dash through the flames, and save the unfortunate lady—and I had no doubt that the general also would be overcome by his terrors, and be incapacitated from escape. In the midst of these vain and impotent endeavours, we saw some dark object moving along the corridor. It proceeded quietly and sedately, whatever it was; and the superstitious peasantry began to give up all for lost, when they saw what they considered the demon of fire himself so deliberately taking his path amidst the flames. I, however, caught a single glimpse, which satisfied me it was the general; and I now in truth believed that his fears had turned his brain, and that he threw himself in his delirium upon certain death. We traced him, however, as he passed each window, and at last saw him dive suddenly into the hottest of the fire, and, to our amazement, emerge in the anteroom of her ladyship's bedchamber. We could even, above the roaring of the flames, hear a scream of delight; and in another instant, again we traced the figure pursuing its fiery way with a burden in its arms, and a shout of hope and exultation among the spectators could no longer be restrained. The walls themselves began to crack and totter in many places, and several of the floors had already given way, yet, apparently undismayed, the figure flitted across each successive window of the corridor, and by some means or other came down the blazing staircase uninjured. I saw, to my delight and astonishment, it was indeed the general, with the still beautiful and fascinating Lady Annabella closely clinging to his neck. I rushed to him in a moment, and offered him my assistance, but he was apparently as calm and collected as he had appeared that very day at the head of his own table. Her ladyship, too, recovered herself very soon, and related her escape, with the fondest acknowledgments of her husband's matchless intrepidity. To all that she said he made no answer whatever; he seemed, indeed, scarcely to listen to what she was saying; but after she had been given over to the care of

her maids, he took me aside, and told me, that in a state of the greatest agitation he walked along the corridor in hopes of finding his way down the back stairs which communicated with the garden. He found the door locked, and entered Lady Annabella's room, with the intention of leaping out of her window; but she sprang upon him, and seized him round the neck—and then his apprehension rose to such a pitch that he lost all command of himself, and how he found his way into the open air, he was altogether unable to guess. After giving me this account, he slipt quietly away from the bustle, and left me musing on what a confoundedly useful sort of cowardice it was, which enabled the man always to be terrified at the right time; and the sum of my musing was this, that it will be a pretty considerable particular long time before all my courage, and dashing, and intrepidity, will raise me to be a general of division, with a splendid fortune—a baronetcy—and two thousand a-year settled on my lineal representative for three generations. So much better is it, as Solomon or some other person has said in his proverbs, to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth than a wooden ladle.

NIGHTS AT MESS.

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CHAPTER I.

Such a set of fellows as the —th Dragoons I never met with in the whole course of my life. Talk of friendliness and hospitality! they would beat old Solomon, who had a table that stretched from one end of Palestine to the other. Their invitations are not given for certain dinners on certain days, but for weeks and months. "There now, there's a good fellow, you'll dine with us till Christmas; we've got a new messman, and the claret is fresh from Dublin." I accepted the invitation, and intend paying it off by instalments of a week at a time;—no constitution could stand their hospitality for a longer period without a little repose. I am now resting on my oars, and getting quit of a slight unsteadiness of the hand in the mornings, which made the eating of an egg as difficult an achievement as any of the labours of Hercules. In about a month I shall be equal to another visit, but in the mean time I will just take a little memorandum of what occurred while I remained with them, by way of keeping their memory green in my soul. The first day nothing remarkable occurred during dinner. The colonel was in the chair, and a jollier-looking president it has never been my luck to meet with. Large, soldierly, and somewhat bloated, he formed a famous combination of the Bacchus subduing lions and conquering India, and the same Bacchus leering into a flagon and bestriding a cask. I am bound to confess, that the latter part of this resemblance is suggested to me by the sign-post of this very decent hostel in which I write, where a prodigious

man, without any particular superfluity of costume, is represented sitting on a puncheon of vast size, with a face so red, so round, so redolent of mirth, and with such a glance of irresistible whim in his eye—I'll bet a hundred to one the painter of that sign has had the honour of an interview with the gallant Colonel O'Looney. There never was a man more popular in a regiment. On parade or at mess he was equally at home. Not one of those *mere* boon companions who swallow potations pottle-deep, and are fit for nothing else, but a man armed at all points, one who "the division of a battle knows," as well as the flavour of a vintage. He seemed somewhere about fifty years of age, with a considerable affectation of the youth about him. The baldness of his crown was scrupulously concealed by combing the long straggling side locks over it; and his allusions were extremely frequent to those infernal helmets which turned a man's hair grey in the very prime of boyhood. He had never left the regiment, but gradually climbed his way up from a humble cornetcy to his present lofty rank, without, however, losing the gaiety which had made him so much liked and courted in the first years of his noviciate. Such was the colonel when I saw him ten days ago presiding at mess. His tones were delicious to listen to. The music of five hundred Irishmen distilled into one glorious brogue, would give but a faint idea of his fine rich Tipperary, —and all so softened by the inimitable good-nature of his expression!—Upon my honour, a story without his voice to tell it with loses almost all its value. When the bottles began their round, the usual hubbub commenced; but after one or two routine bumpers, my attention was attracted by a conversation at the foot of the table.

"Faith an' ye're quite right," said the colonel in answer to some observation, "what you say about marriage. There's a stark-staring scarcity of the commodity. Here have we been stationed now in this city of York for six weeks, and divil a young fellow of us all has picked up an heiress yet. Now, mind me, when I was here about thirty years ago, it was a very different story. We had something or other to laugh at every day in the way of the ladies,—either a start off to Gretna Green, or a duel, or a horse-whipping. But now,

by the sowl of me, there's no sort of amusement to be had at all."

"Pray, colonel, are there any heiresses in this neighbourhood at present?" drawled forth a young cornet.

"Faith, surely," replied the colonel, "ye ought to be on the look-out for that yourself. I've enough to do to pick up information on my own account."

"I merely wanted to benefit a little by your experience," rejoined the other.

"Exparience? Is it *that* ye're wanting? Well, I'll just tell you a bit of a sacret. That same exparience is the very divil in a man's way when he thinks of doing the civil thing to a young lady that has the misfortune to be rich. Young fellows like you are trusted by guardians and mothers, and cattle of that sort, and even by the damsel herself, because they see no danger in a youth with so little exparience. I found it so myself when I joined the regiment first. Never was known such a set of fine frank open-hearted creturs as I found all the young darlings at every party I went to. No shyness, no fears, no hurrying away at my approach in case I should ask them to dance with me; but now that I have had about thirty years of this same practice in the art of courtship, there's no such thing as getting near the sweet creturs even to whisper a word. Every mother's son—daughter I mane—of them, gets away as soon as possible from such a dangerous divil as a young fellow with so many years' exparience. Mothers and aunts throw themselves into the gap to cover their retreat, and lug me off to the card-table, that they may keep their eyes on me all the night. Ach, when we were stationed here in the glorious eighteen hundred, mothers and aunts never troubled their heads about such a sweet little inexparienced lambkin as I was."

"But you were talking of heiresses, colonel," said the cornet, hiding a laugh at the jolly commander's attributing the change which he perceived in the reception he met with from the ladies, to any thing rather than its right cause; "you were talking of heiresses—were there many of them in this neighbourhood at that time?"

"Och, plinty; they either were or pretended to be: so the

honour of carrying them off was all the same, ye know. Whenever an officer got three days' leave of absence, he was sure to bring back a wife with him; the postilions on the north road grew as rich as nabobs, and their horses as thin as lathes: all that a girl had to do was to say she was an heiress; nobody ever asked her what it was of; whether an estate or a lawsuit—off she was to the old blacksmith before the week was out, and married as fast and as sure as her mother. Then came the cream of the joke, for there was always some insolent brother, or cousin, or discarded sweetheart, to shoot immediately on your return, so that the fun lasted very often as long as the honey-moon."

"And how many of the officers were lucky enough to get married?"

"Och, every one of them, I tell ye, except myself and Jack O'Farrell. Did I ever tell you how nearly ould Jack and I were buckled?"

"No, colonel," cried a great many voices; "let us hear."

"Gintly, my lads, gintly. I'll tell you first of my friend Jack. I'll take a little time to think of it before I tell ye my own adventure." Here the colonel sighed, and said something about agonised feelings and breaking hearts, which contrasted so ridiculously with his hilarious countenance and Herculean figure, that we could not avoid bursting into a very hearty laugh. The colonel, after appearing a little discomposed, for I believe he considers himself no contemptible performer in the art of pathetic story-telling, joined in our laugh, tossed off a bumper, and began.

"Well—Jack O'Farrell was the most gallant-looking fellow I ever saw—great red whiskers, shoulders like the side of a house, bright fiery eyes, and a gash from a shillelah across his brow, that made him look a handsome copy of the divil, as a soldier should. He was a Galway man, the best-tempered fellow that ever was seen in the world, and had been out five times before he was twenty. One of them was with his uncle, fighting Dick Callaghan of Oonamorlich (he was shot afterwards by Sir Neil Flanagan in the Fifteen Acres); so, said Jack—'I only took him in the shoulder, for it's unchristian to kill one's relations.' Jack came across, and

joined us in this very town. In a moment he won every heart at the mess-table; he drank four bottles of claret, thirteen glasses of brandy and water, and smoked two-and-twenty cigars; and then saw the chaplain safe to his lodgings, as if he had been his brother; it did us all good to see such a steady fellow. Well, just at this time, we were in the heart of running away with the women, fighting the men, and playing the divil entirely; and Jack resolved to be equal with the best of us. There was to be a ball, a public ball of some sort or other, at the County Hall, and I saw my friend Jack particularly busy in making his preparations. He packed up his carpet-bag, dressing-case, and a brace of horse pistols, and had got a week's leave of absence the day before the dance. 'And what's all this you're doing, Jack?' said I. Now, my lads, I've been so long away from owld Ireland, and rattled so much about the world, that I've lost the Irish intirely, or I would try to give you an imitation of Jack's brogue, but that's impossible for a tongue that has the trick of the English."

The colonel luckily did not remark how some of us were amused with this apology for not being able to speak like an Irishman, and went on—

"'An' what's all this you're doing, Jack?' said I.

"'Doin'? an' what should I be doin'!' says he, 'but puttin' up my weddin' garments?'

"'Your wedding?' says I; 'are you going to be married, Jack?'

"'Faith, an' I hope so,' says he; 'or what would be the use o' this wonder of the world?' holding up a beautiful coloured silk nightcap between his finger and thumb.

"'An' who is the lady, you sowl?'

"'How the divil should I know?' said Jack. 'I haven't seen her, nor asked her yet; but I suppose there'll be plenty at this ball. I'm goin' to have a post-chaise at the door, an' I'll bet ye I'll show ye Mrs Cornet O'Farrell before ye're a week owlder.'

"'Done,' and 'done!' we said: and it was a wager.

"Jack and I went into the ball-room together.

" ' I wonder if Mrs John O'Farrell is here,' said Jack, as he looked round among the ladies.

" ' Faith,' said I, ' it's not for me to answer ye; ye had better ask them; but I truly hope Mrs Cornet O'Looney is not in this collection, for such a set of scare-crows I never'——

—" ' Ooch, ullaloo, man, hold your tongue; it's not for the beauty of them one cares, but just the fame of the thing, to have carried off an heiress; and an heiress Mrs O'Farrell must be, that's a sure case; for, ye see, barrin' my pay, and a small thrifle I owe my creditors besides, I shall have nothing to support the young O'Farrells, let alone the wife and the maid.'

" Just at this time a rich owld sugar merchant with a whole posse of daughters, and other ladies, came bustling into the room.

" ' There, now, Jack,' said I, ' now's your time. Here comes owld Fusby the sugar merchant from London, and half a dozen heiresses pinned to his apron. Off with ye, man. Ye can't go wrong: take the very first that will have ye. I tell ye, he's rich enough to cover the Bog of Allan with melted gold.'

" ' Then he's just the sort of fellow I want—so, wi' ye'r lave, I'll go and do the needful to the tall young woman in blue. If he gives her only a thousand a-foot, she'll be a very comfortable companion in a post-chaise.'

" Jack was introduced in all due form, and in a minute was capering away in the middle of the floor as if he were stamping hay; and thinking all the time of the chariot at the door and Gretna Green. His partner seemed very much pleased with his attentions. She simpered and curtsied to all Jack's pretty speeches, and I began to be rather alarmed about the bet. She was very tall, very muscular-looking and strong, and seemed a good dozen of years older than the enraptured Jack. If she had been twenty years older than his mother, it would have been all the same, provided she had been an heiress; for at that time, as I tell ye, we were the only two bachelors left who had not picked up a wife with a prodigious reputation for money, and Jack was determined to leave me behind in the race. After he had danced with

her four or five different sets, he came up to me in raptures. 'Isn't she a dear sweet sowl?' said Jack, 'and such a mould for grenadiers! She's a Scotchwoman too, and that's next door to an Irishman anyhow.'

"'If she's a Scotchwoman,' said I, 'you must be sure of your ground—they haven't so many heiresses among the hills as in the fat fields of England. What's her name?'

"'There now,' said he, slapping his leg, 'ain't I a pretty fellow? I've danced with her half the night, and niver asked her what her name is. I'll go and ask her this moment.' And accordingly he marched up to her once more, and carried her off in triumph as his partner.

"'Pray, madam, may I make so bowld,' he began, 'as to ask you what yer name may be?—for owld Mr Fusby spakes so much with the root of his tongue that I can't understand a word he would mintion.'

"'My name,' replied the lady, 'is Miss Sibilla M'Scrae of Glen Buckie and Ben Scart.'

"'And a very pretty name too, upon my honour,' said Jack; 'what size may Glen Buckie be?—you'll excuse me.'

"'Oo, in our family we never can tell to a mile or twa what the size of ony o' the estates may be—but I believe it's about seventy-five thousand acres of land, besides the four lakes and the river.'

"'Seventy-five—*thousand*, did you say?' exclaimed Jack, quite overcome by his good fortune; 'and I hope yer family's well, ma'am. How did ye lave all yer brothers and sisters?'

"'I haena got ony brothers, and my sisters are pretty weel, I thank you.'

"'An' I'm very glad to hear *that*. Do ye happen to know what my name is? I am John O'Farrell, Esquire, of Ballynamora, in the county of Galway, of a very ancient family—and what do ye think of the name, ma'am?'

"'Oo, it just seems a very pretty name.'

"'Do ye raally think so? An' how would ye like to have it yourself?'

"'I think it would do just as weel as ony other.'

"'Och then, my dear Miss M'Scrae, you're just the sort of cratur I wanted—I've a post-chaise at the door.'

"'Indeed!'

"'Yes, indeed, my charmer, and a pair of pistols in it too.

"'Indeed?' again replied the lady, looking very conscious all the time.

"'Ay! and a sweetheart in this ball-room that will go off with me to Gretna Green this moment.'

"'Dear me—and wha is the happy leddy?'

"'An' who the divil should it be, but just yer own self, Miss Sibilla M'Scrae?'

"'Me, sir?' said the lady, endeavouring to blush, 'are ye serious? Ye should na trifle wi' a young lass's feelins.'

"'The divil take all thrifles of the sort—I'm sarious, my darling, and I'll prove it—will ye go off with me this instant?'

"'Had we no better wait till we've had the supper, sir? Ye know we've paid for't in the ticket.'

"'Faith, an' there's some sinse in that; and will you be riddy the moment after?'

"The lady blushed, and looked her consent, and Jack was in raptures all the time of supper, meditating on the four lakes and the river, and the seventy-five thousand acres of land. Supper at last was ended, and a new dance formed. Jack, who had by no means neglected either the champagne or his partner, whispered into her ear, 'Are ye all riddy now, my sweet Sibilla? the horses must be tired waiting.'

"'Weel, since ye insist upon't, I'm all ready enough—only my shawl is in the leddy's robing room.'

"'Is it, faith?' said Jack; 'then I'll go for it this moment.' He was back with the speed of lightning, threw a shawl over her shoulders, and, without attracting observation, handed her down stairs into the post-chaise, jumped in after her, and rattled off as fast as the horses could gallop.

"Soon after this the old sugar merchant and all his train prepared to take their departure. I waited to hand them to their carriage, but the little fat old woman, his wife, came rushing into the room, kicking up such a terrible dust—'Och!' cried she—'Oh dear! oh dear! Somebody has taken off my shawl—real Ingy—worth eighty guineas every shilling—there's a thief in the room!—only think!'

"Every thing was thrown into the greatest confusion; some

of the ladies fainted, and ye niver saw such an uproar in yer lives. At last, it was discovered, when every lady had taken her own shawl, that the only one unclaimed was that which had been worn by Miss Sibilla M'Scrae. That lady herself was nowhere to be found; search was made for her every where in vain. The little old woman stormed as if she was practising for bedlam.

"'This comes,' she cried, 'of having beggarly Scotch governesses that wear cotton shawls. I've suspected she would come to no good ever since she has been so intimate with the potticary's boy.'

"'Potticary's boy!' thought I, 'faith, this is beyond a joke entirely—I must be after Jack;' so I slipt away from the confusion, got into a post-chaise and four, and set off in pursuit of O'Farrell, hoping to overtake him in time to save him from marrying an heiress without a penny, who wore nothing but cotton shawls. In the mean time, information had been given that the lady was seen stepping into a post-chaise, accompanied by a tall man in a cloak, with very red whiskers.—'Oh, pursue them! pursue them!' cried Mrs Fusby, 'the wretch has stolen my Ingy shawl, and gone off with the potticary's boy—I know him by the description—his hair is as red and coarse as unrefined at twopence a-pound.' Nothing would satisfy her rage but instantly giving chase. A magistrate was disturbed from his slumbers, an information of the robbery laid before him, and in a very short time a couple of constables were scouring down the road with a warrant to apprehend the suspected delinquents.

"Here were we all tearing along—Jack and his lady—myself—and the two thief-takers,—never was there such a race in the memory of man. I found I was gaining on the lovers every stage, and when I got to a village on this side of Durham, I found I had overshot my mark, and actually got before them. I discovered there were two roads to the place, and that as it was the only point for miles and miles where they could change horses, they must come to it by the longer road, which it seemed they must have taken. Being quite satisfied with this, I ordered myself a comfortable breakfast, and patiently waited their arrival. I had laid

an embargo on all the horses, so I was certain they could not get on without my knowledge. Just as I was sitting down to my stewed fowl and beef-steaks, I saw their carriage rattle up to the inn; and in a few minutes after, another chariot—postilions hot—horses all of a tremble—drove up furiously to the door. 'Who the devil can this be?' thought I, for ye see I knew nothing at all about the thief-takers—'Will this be another couple, I wonder?' But when I saw two coarse, strong, blackguard-looking fellows get out, I could not tell what to make of the whole business. Out of the first carriage came Jack in his plain clothes—for I forgot to tell ye he did not go to the ball in his uniform—looking very tired and sleepy—and handed out his huge raw-boned partner, whose beauty was by no means increased by her night's frolic. I did not exactly know how to proceed; so I sat down to my breakfast, enjoying the thoughts of surprising Jack, and consulting with myself how to break the matter to him in the pleasantest manner. But my cogitations were broken off by hearing Jack, who was in the next room to me, only divided by a thin partition, saying, 'Well, gentlemen—the divil take howld of yer sowls—what do ye want with me?'

"'Only a little private talk with you, sir—that's all,' said one of the men in return.

"'Niver mind yer private talks—say your say, and be quick about it, or by the piper that'——

"'Come, come, no nonsense, master,' said the man; 'you know well enough what we be come about, I daresay—did ye ever hear of one Mr Fusby, sir?'

"'Oho!' said Jack, 'so ye're come about that, are ye? An' ye'll stop us from goin' on to the ind of our journey?'

"'Yes—back you must go with us to York—them there is very serious charges'——

"'Och, divil take the charges—I'll pay all yer charges—ye may stop here and ate and drink like a couple of corporals—but this very day I'll find my way into Scotland.'

"'We'll see about that,' replied the man, sulkily. 'We thought you might have been trusted without the irons; but

the gentleman seems anxious for the fetters—out with them, Tom'—to his companion.

"'Fetters!' said Jack; 'to be sure I am anxious for the fetters; and the owld Blacksmith will fix them as tight as a Bishop.'

"'Bishop's a rare good 'un, no doubt, sir,' said the man; 'but we can do that as well.'

"'Do *that?* Do what, ye spalpeens?'

"'Why, splice you and this here lady together, sir; she's an accomplice after the act.'

"'After what act, ye brute baste? We're not married yet.'

"'No, nor won't be this bout. Come, out with the darbies, Tom; we hain't time to be palavering here all day.'

"'Hark ye, gintlemen,' said Jack, growing more and more enraged and astonished, 'this window is pretty high, thank God, and will break a gintleman's neck very prettily; so I advise ye to be off, and out of hearing, before I can crack this egg, or, by the poker, your wives may buy their mourning.'

"'Come, come,' replied the man, no ways daunted, 'we must have no more of your blarney; we are up to all such tricks. You are suspected of stealing Mrs Fusby's property.'

"'Is it you they mane, my dear?' said Jack to the lady. 'Ye may go back, my men, as fast as you plase, and tell the little fat owld woman, the sugar-seller's wife, with my compliments, that Miss Sibilla M'Scrae, of Glen Buckie and Ben Scart, is not her property at all; and is very much obliged to her for her care, but will keep what she has got.'

"'Will keep what she stole off with?'

"'Just so,' said Jack, nodding his head.

"'And do you confess,' continued the man, 'that she has got the article with her?'

"'Ye may say so, when ye write home to yer friends; and a very pretty article too, don't ye think so, my dear?' said Jack, drawing himself up, and looking as pleased as Punch.

"'And you won't give it up?' said the man.

"'By no manes.'

"'Then we must force you.'

"'Och, must ye?' said Jack; 'and I'm particularly obliged to ye for yer kindness.'

"I now heard a scuffle; and two heavy falls, rapidly succeeding each other, made me recognise Jack's one, two. In a moment I rushed into the room, nearly killed with laughter at all the conversation, and there I found Jack, his nostrils widened with passion, and his whiskers redder than usual, standing over the two unfortunate strangers, who were groaning most piteously on the floor. The moment he saw me, he burst into one of his wildest shouts of joy.—'Och, only look here, O'Looney, my darlint; these two gintlemen with the bloody faces are friends of Mr Fusby, and are sent off to stop our journey to Gretna Green.'

"'And I'm very glad to hear it, Jack,' said I.

"'I call you to witness, sir,' said one of the men, getting up, and putting a handkerchief to his eye; 'we are deforced in the execution of our duty. I order you to assist us in the king's name.'

"'Faith will I, willingly,' said I.

"Jack upon this was almost choked with passion. He stood and scowled at us all, and then folding his arms across his chest, asked, as quietly as he could—'An' tell me now, gintlemen, what it is ye really want!"

"'We want possession of your body. This here is our authority,' said the constable.

"'My body, ye hell-dog?—Are ye a set of doctors? and do ye think I'm a corpse?'

"'No,' said the man, 'we don't take you for no such thing. It's likely you know more of doctors and corpses nor we do. Ain't you a pottercarrier's boy?'

"'Pottercarrier! D'ye mane an apothecary? and do ye take me for his boy? *me*, *me*, John O'Farrell, Esquire, that is so soon to be proprietor of seventy-five thousand acres of land, besides Lord knows how many lakes and rivers? Och, ye infernal scoundrels, I'll physic ye?'

"Saying this, he advanced to murder the two men, but I stopped him, and said, 'Listen to me, Jack; you shall not go to Gretna Green this time. She's nothing but a governess,

that taches little girls to spell, and ate bread and butter without dirtying their fingers.'

"'Who do ye mane, O'Looney?—Miss Sibilla M'Scrae, of Glen Buckie and Ben Scart?'

"'Yes, faith do I,' said I, 'and no other. Ask her.'

"Jack turned round to the lady, and said, 'Pray, madam, do ye tache little girls to ate bread and butter, and spell without dirtying their fingers? Are ye not one of the heiresses of all the fine land and water you towld me off?' The lady, though I suppose she felt her position a little uncomfortable, was not very easily frightened, and brazened it as bold as a statue.

"'To be sure,' she said, 'I'm governess to the wee children at Mr Fusby's, and learn them hoo to speak English. Ye never askit me that. But I'm heiress, for a' that, to Glen Buckie and Ben Scart.'

"'And what may the rint-roll be, madam?' said Jack, looking rather more peaceable.

"'Oo, 'deed, the rent-roll's just nothing, for it's a' hill grund, excep' the moss.'

"Jack made a low bow, took her by the hand, and led her to the policemen. 'Gintlemen,' he said, 'let me present you with the lady that has caused all this uproar, and Mrs Fusby is quite welcome to her property again.'

"'That won't do, sir,' said the man, who now began to recover his confidence. 'Here we are sent out after this lady and you, on suspicion of your having stolen a piece of goods.'

"'And a pretty piece of goods she is,' said Jack, 'to talk to me of her seventy-five thousand acres of land! Take her, I say.'

"'Yes, we'll take her into custody, and you too, in spite of your fine talking. She's thought to have stolen Mrs Fusby's shawl last night in the ball-room; and by the description, that's it lying on the sofa.'

"'Whew!' said Jack, who now discovered the mistake. 'Och, I see it all now—this bates Bannagher entirely. Why ye villains, *I* took the shawl.

"'I call you to witness, sir, he confesses the robbery,' said the man, addressing himself to me.

"'Keep the tongue in your head, ye rapscallion!' continued Jack. 'How the divil should I know whose shawl it was? I took the first that came. I tell ye that, on the word of a gintleman and an officer'——

"'O, sir,' said the man, 'we are all officers here—police-officer, or medical officer, it's all the same, I reckon.'

"I now saw the whole business, and was like to die with laughing at the man continuing to believe Jack the apothecary's apprentice. However, I undertook to be answerable for Jack's appearance, and he and I returned in one chaise to York. The matter was easily explained to Mrs Fusby, and even Miss Sibilla was forgiven. I am not quite sure what became of her afterwards; but I suppose she eloped with somebody else, for the example of our regiment made a fly-away match indispensable among all ranks of the people. I won my wager of Jack, who told me, that all the way down he had been thinking, that if he made all possible allowances for the number of her sisters—saying even she had seventy-four of them—he would still step into possession of a snug little farm of a thousand acres, besides his share of the four lakes and the river. Now, wasn't that a narrow escape from the blacksmith?"

"Yes—and now, colonel," said we all in a breath, "tell us your own adventure."

Colonel O'Looney sighed, and shook his head. "No, no, my lads, no more stories to-night—I'll keep mine for some other occasion. In the mean time, pass round the bottles, and keep them constantly moving."

CHAPTER II.

The bottle went its rounds for some time with unfailing regularity. The colonel seemed determined to recruit his exhausted frame by maintaining strict silence, and drinking as fast as he could. Our spirits rose with every bumper, and even the most silent and retired amongst us felt a wonderful inclination to take a leading part in the conversation. On this account I found it was somewhat difficult to fix my attention upon any speaker in particular, as I was sure to be distracted by some other little knot of orators discussing some point of military discipline or hunting intelligence close at my side. This is one of the disagreeables of a large party. Though you are in the same room, and at the same table, with the cleverest and most amusing fellow in the world, so far as you are concerned he might just as well be lecturing a hundred miles off on political economy, for some detestable blockheads or other at your ear are sure to babble incessantly, so as to hinder you from hearing a syllable he is saying. In the mean time you see the three or four who have split off into a party, of which he is the centre, laughing immoderately at some joke, or listening delightedly to some story, while devil a word you can hear but the silly remarks of the drivellers between whom you are placed. This, I have remarked, is greatly the case at military and naval messes—but on this occasion it was less to be regretted, as all of us were pretty much on an equality, and it was as agreeable to listen to one as another. For my own part, I sat between two very pleasant fellows who never opened their lips. One, to whom I was introduced for the first time that day, was a tall man, prodigiously thin, and with so melancholy an expression of countenance that he irresistibly reminded me of Don Quixote. His politeness was unbounded—and his attentions, as I was a stranger, were directed in an especial manner to me. He touched me on the arm as each new magnum made its way to us, and said, without any change of countenance, "Capital! quite as good as the last; help yourself." His example aided his precept in the most winning manner imaginable; and I confess I was

greatly taken with a gentleman whose kindness was so uniform, and whose conversation was so judiciously curtailed. He seemed about five-and-forty years of age, and his name was Captain Withers. I made several attempts to get him into more general conversation, but with very little success. His unceasing anxiety to see that I was not neglected, broke off every effort I made to draw him out, as he always interrupted me with his verdict on the quality of the wine, and recommendation to fill my glass before it passed. I was on the point of giving him up and applying to my neighbour on the left, when a discussion farther down the table arrested my attention.

"You may depend upon it," said a young lieutenant; "the fact is as I have told you—I think I ought to know pretty well, for my grandfather was a judge."

"What is the fact?" replied the other.

"Why, that the jury settle every thing,—provocation, damages, sentence"——

"I can't believe a word of it, even though your grandfather had been a chancellor. The thing seems so ridiculous. What can a set of bakers and tailors know about the feelings and customs of gentlemen? They may be very good judges of twopenny loaves and leather breeches, but what should they know about the pleasures of twelve paces and a hair trigger? For instance, my dear fellow, I shoot you through the body"——

"I had rather be excused, upon my honour—shoot Withers—the bullet will have less work to get through him."

"Well, I've no objections.—Withers! I shoot you at twelve paces—signal given—every thing fair—you are returned next morning among the killed; now, what the deuce should a jury of twelve—or whatever their number is—mechanics know about the imperative causes that compelled me to have the disagreeable pleasure of turning your body into a riddle?"

"None, I should think," replied Withers, composedly, "unless some of them were sieve-makers, and thought you were interfering with their trade."

" Or wits, who excel as manufacturers of conundrums," said the lieutenant.

" Ah, very good," returned the other; " but, without any joke, do you think they would bring me in guilty of murder, whatever the provocation may have been?"

" Oh, I daresay they would," replied Withers, with more energy than I had yet seen him exert,—" the rascals would do any thing. To the devil, I say, with all juries, unless they are assembled round a drum."

" Why, Withers, you seem quite angry, that twelve honest men should think it rather unfriendly in a gentlemar to put a bullet into your body."

" And so I am," replied my neighbour. " Isn't that a private affair between Somers and myself?"

" Come, come, Withers," rejoined the lieutenant, " you must have some private pique against the jury-box. Out with it, man; all this rage against them can't arise merely from their being unwilling that they should haul up (or perhaps hoist up) this bloody-minded Somers for making a hole in your jacket."

" Don't you know," said Withers, " what cause I have to be angry? how I was"——

" No, not at all; let us hear; let us hear."

The idea of getting a story from Withers seemed to be considered almost as miraculous as the oratory of the prophet's ass, and every one prepared to listen with a due degree of attention to such a supernatural exhibition. My friend, however, began his narrative with as moveless a countenance as he had held his tongue; and I need scarcely say, that he found time, without interfering with the main thread of his story, not only to help himself as often as his turn came, but also to continue his criticisms and friendly attentions to me.

" Shortly after the glorious peace, as they called it, of eighteen hundred and fifteen," he thus began his story, " I went upon half-pay as a jolly lieutenant. I was very glad of the change, as every body else was, at first. It was very pleasant to rise when one chose, to dine where he liked, and to run a comparatively trifling risk of having his brains knocked out before the evening. But rising at your own

hour, dining at your own time, and even keeping your brains in safety, becomes very tiresome and fatiguing. In about a month I would have given the world to be back again to our hurried reveillés, uncertain dinners, and all the other glorious sufferings of 'grim-visaged war.' I tired of London in a very short time. They are such a set of chattering fellows those Cockneys; they worried my life out with their questions. Even in my coffee-room, I never could finish my modicum of port in peace. Some inquisitive fellow or other was sure to sit down at the opposite sit of the table, and ask me all about Vaterloo and the Dook of Villington. I never was much given to talking, especially over my wine, and offended sundry patriotic enquirers by the shortness of my replies. But their persecution was too much for me at last. I was terrified to go any where; the moment the medal was seen, I was elevated into a hero, and had every opportunity given me of elevating myself into an orator at the same time. If I hid the medal, some coffee-room tormentor was sure to recognise me. I cursed the Duke, and the Peninsula, and Waterloo as the disturbers of my peace, and resolved to hide myself in the country for a few months, till our fame should be in some measure forgotten. Luckily, I saw an advertisement in the newspapers of a cottage to be let furnished, in the most beautiful part of Warwickshire. 'Swelling hills and verdant lawns, flashing waterfalls and umbrageous trees, combined,' the advertisement said, to 'form a scene fitted for the contemplative poet of nature, the melancholy recluse, or the enthusiastic lover of picturesque magnificence.' I soon settled the business with Mr Robins, and started down for my new abode, having ordered a tolerable stock of genuine old port to precede me from the cellars of old Barnes. I arrived at last at the village of Holywood, and enquired for the cottage I had taken. 'Minarets of the Gothic style give a degree of castellated splendour,' so Mr Robins said, 'rarely to be met with in a cottage consisting of two small sitting rooms and three chambers. Situated in a small park-like enclosure, it contains every luxury within itself. Grecian couches, Arabian beds, and Turkey carpets, would add little to the convenience of this secluded paradise.' And in fact there

is no saying what they might have done, for in this instance the experiment had not been tried. There were some good strong chairs and tables, a drugget on the floor, of a very comfortable appearance, and I must have looked like an innocent image of one of the babes in the wood, as I lay asleep in a little tent bed, about a foot and a half too short for me, with my complexion delicately whitened by the reflection of the clean white dimity bed-curtains. However, my old cook, who was as deaf as a post, had never heard either of Waterloo or the Duke of Wellington, and I was perfectly happy and contented. I picked up a stout natty sort of Suffolk punch, and a good strong dennet, kept them both at the village inn, smoked my segar and drank my bottle, as we are told the patriarchs did long ago under their fig-trees. I actually began to grow fat, but in a few weeks my happiness was greatly interrupted. The clergyman of the parish called on me. He was a little old fellow about sixty, with a prodigious nose, surmounted by a pair of coloured spectacles. When he came in, he sat down and took off his spectacles without saying a word, and as I was never very talkative, I waited very quietly till he should commence the conversation.

"'You have been at the wars, captain?' he said.

"I bowed.

"'Ah! bad things those wars; and this Waterloo, that the people talk so much of, was a bloody fight.'

"'Yes,' I said.

"'A bloody fight—a very bloody fight'—he went on—'but what is that, sir, to the great battle of Armageddon, hundreds of thousands upon either side—earth shaking—sea trembling—pray, are you a student of the apocalyptic commentaries?'

"'Commentaries!' I said, glad to catch at least a word I had heard before—'oh, I recollect Cæsar's Commentaries very well: some good fights there, sir.'

"'Yes, sir, but Armageddon is the greatest fight of all. Compared to it, this Waterloo is but a quarrel among some school-boys—the Duke of Wellington but the strongest bully of the school—but when the devil himself is let loose and placed at the head of an army'——

"'I'll back the duke against him for a rump and dozen, said I, 'horns, tail, and all.'

"The little old man looked quite confounded at my reply —put on his spectacles, and in a very short time got up and bade me good-morning. He had published a huge book, giving a full description of the battle; he was a little cracked, I suppose, in the upper story, but not a bad fellow for all that,—he drank port wine like a gentleman, and did not trouble his friends with much conversation. Several other people called on me, but we did not find each other very delightful, so after I had returned their visits, we nodded very politely when we met in the country roads, but never troubled our heads about talking. At last a gentleman called on me, of the name of Jenkins—he was a fellow quite after my own heart—had the best cellar in the county—said very little about it—but did his work after dinner like a man. Jenkins and I were sworn friends in a very short time. He was about fifty years of age, round, short, and ruddy. He had a capital house about half a mile from the village, and his elder sister, a widow, took care of his domestic concerns, as his daughter, a very pretty little girl of sixteen or seventeen, was thought too young to be installed as mistress of the family. Well, it was quite delightful, after driving through the beautiful scenery of that neighbourhood, or hearing my reverend friend's account of some new vision, or his interpretation of some old one, to walk quietly over to 'The Farm,' as Jenkins's villa was called, and have a cozy dinner and a quiet bottle or two of port. The whole family were always so happy to see me —Mrs Meddleton, the widow, and little Julia, the daughter, seemed to contend which should be most hospitable. Sometimes they came down in the same way and visited me at my little box in the village. On these occasions Mrs Meddleton always did me the honour to preside at my table, and little Julia, with whom, as I had nothing else to do, I was very much inclined to fall in love, seemed to make herself quite at home. In the mean time, old Jenkins and I sat opposite to each other, and pushed the bottle between us, very often without saying more than a word or two by the hour. The ladies were both what is called romantic, and used to talk a

great deal about moonlight and nightingales. I thought it a capital joke to hear the old lady discoursing so poetically, and Julia seemed to enjoy the fun of it as much as I. When they left my cottage, I generally showed them through the fields, and often accompanied them the whole way home. Well, this sort of thing went on delightfully for I should think two years. Julia was now as charming a creature as I had ever taken the trouble to suppose women could be made. She was beautiful and merry: and I must say, I began to think that I was rather a favourite with her. To be sure I never paid her any compliments, or put myself greatly out of my way to show my affection; but, by Jove! about the end of the second bottle, strange feelings used to find their way into my heart, and I thought so much of her lovely features, that often through the haze of my segar, I have fancied I saw her smiling and looking very gracious, when perhaps it was only her father whiffing away as fast as a volcano. In the mean time the old lady continued to be as kind as ever. She kept on quoting nonsense out of novels or romances, and was very well pleased with the 'yes' or 'no,' as the case might be, with which I replied to her rhapsodies.

"About this time a former pupil of our clergyman, Frank Walton, came down from Oxford to visit his old preceptor. The old man was half mad with pride and vanity, as Frank had taken some classes, or medals, or whatever they call their honours, at the University, and invited us all to a dinner in celebration of the event. We went; upon my honour he was a very good fellow that Frank Walton for a young one, and a chap who had done nothing but turn over old musty parchment, instead of handling a sword. We managed to make old Armageddon as happy, and nearly as noisy as if he had been present at the battle; and saw the Jenkinses safe across the fields with the steadiness of a couple of field-marshals. He came home with me to my cottage, and we had a very agreeable chat over a glass of brandy and water and a segar, —that is to say, he had most of the chat to himself, and a devil of a fellow to talk he was. He spoke of the Jenkinses. They had been old friends of his when he lived at the Rectory, and he really spoke so warmly and kindly of them all, that I

could not resist hinting to him, in rather an obscure way, that I had some hopes of becoming one of Mr Jenkins's family. Jenkins, I said, has been quite a brother to me already, so that we scarcely require any relationship to make us more intimate and friendly. The young collegian shook me by the hand, and congratulated me on my prospect. 'He did not believe,' he said, 'there was a more amiable creature in the world than the object of my choice.' We had some more segars with accompaniments, on the strength of our new acquaintance, and parted the best friends in the world. Next evening, as I sauntered up to the Farm, I saw little Julia and Frank Walton straying slowly up the avenue before me. I got on the grass at the side, so as to make no noise, and got quite close upon them before they perceived my approach. In answer to something Walton said, I heard the young lady reply, in what I took to be rather an agitated tone—'I have seen his attentions for some time, and my aunt, I fancy, sees them too.'—'The devil she does,' thought I.

"'Do you think your father would approve of it?' said Walton.

"'I don't see how he could make any objection. Mr Withers seems already a great favourite with him. I myself should be quite pleased, and my aunt, I am sure, will be delighted.'

"'Sweet angel!' I said to myself, 'she will be quite pleased!' I was just rushing up to thank her for the delightful discovery I had made, when Walton saw me, snatched my hand, and shook it very warmly. Julia, in the mean time, being very much startled by my unexpected appearance, made the best of her way to the house.

"'I have done the business for you,' exclaimed Walton, with the most friendly warmth. 'Father, aunt, and daughter will all be delighted with whatever proposal you choose to make. As a very old friend of the family, I mentioned the subject to Miss Julia just as you came up; and, I assure you, her heart is entirely on your side.'

"I never was so happy or proud in my life. I thanked the jolly young Oxonian as kindly as I could, and asked him to consult with me that evening over some brandy and water,

and segars. When we arrived at Mr Jenkins's, the whole party were kinder to me than ever. Walton, by way of preventing any awkwardness which Julia might feel, under such interesting circumstances, took the care of entertaining her entirely upon himself. He whispered with her on the sofa; and once or twice, when I heard my name mentioned, I looked at her, and found such a beautiful and merry sort of smile upon her countenance, that I became more and more convinced that the young creature, by some means or other, had fallen desperately in love with me. Old Jenkins filled his glass, and drank my health with a look of very particular meaning. The old lady sat simpering beside me on the sofa, thinking it a capital thing, no doubt, to have something to say in so interesting a matter as a marriage. She sighed deeply every now and then; and as I supposed the business put her in mind of her own courtship, I did not like to take any notice of her proceedings. I merely told her to cheer up and look happy, for I had something to say to her brother, which she would be, perhaps, not very sorry to hear.

"'Sweet creature! so kind, so compassionate!' she said, looking at me with such a comical leer upon her face, that I could scarcely keep from laughing, and then hiding her eyes in her handkerchief.

"'Oh!' said old Jenkins, 'I guess something of the business, Withers. I give my hearty consent; but you had better settle the whole matter with my sister. The ladies know better about these things than we do.'

"Saying this, he finished his glass in a twinkling; and telling us he was going after Walton and Julia, who had gone down by the summer-house, he disappeared, leaving me alone with Mrs Meddleton.

"I filled up my glass, and sat silent for some time, not knowing very well how to open the business to such a silly, romantic sort of old lady. But, in a little, she took up the subject herself.

"'Have you been long unattached, Captain Withers?' she said in a very sentimental voice.

"'About four years and a half,' I replied—'ever since a very few months after the peace.'

"'But previous to that time,' the old fool continued—'previous to that time, I think I could tell from your face and manners, you have been more than once engaged.'

"Here, thought I, this silly creature is going to bother my life out about Waterloo and the Duke of Wellington. 'Yes, madam,' I replied, 'I have had my share in nine serious engagements, besides ten or twelve trifling little affairs not worth speaking of.'

"'Then, I perceive, you have been a man of very diffusive gallantry!' she said with a simper.

"Diffusive gallantry! thought I. There's a phrase! 'Why yes, Mrs Meddleton, we all of us did our best to follow the duke's example, and he is a devil of a fellow to come up to the scratch.'

"'Ah! Captain Withers,' she cried, 'you have a soul far, far above scratching!—happiness, contentment, obedience, will far better become your quiet home, than the scratching, striving, and fighting you confess you were apt to meet with in your miscellaneous engagements.'

"'Yes,' said I, very dryly, wishing to stop her nonsense; but all my attempts were vain.

"You have a nice cottage in the village, Captain Withers; elegant, sumptuous, refined, fit for the abode of a retired warrior.'

"'I suspect, madam, you have been studying the advertisement; but it said something about the retirement of a poet—nothing that I recollect of about a warrior.'

"'A poet!—so, my heart's fondest longings at length are realised. You are a poet, Captain Withers; I have suspected it a long time. What a cheering employment for your lonely hours! The lines to a Robin Redbreast in the Warwick Mercury—are they yours?—sweet, beautiful, delightful!'

"'No; I never wrote a line of any such cursed nonsense in my life.'

"'Ah! in a higher strain—an ode, perhaps, or an epic—grand, overwhelming, sublime!'

"I took two or three gulps of the port, and did not answer a word. At last I said, 'Mr Jenkins, madam, left me here

to consult you on a very tender subject. Your brother, as he told us, gives his consent: your niece has no objections; and I only wait your approval to consider myself the happiest of men.'

"She held down her head, and muttered, 'Charming, eloquent, touching!' And then looking me in the face, said, 'Is it then possible that you can imagine for a moment that any selfish scrupulosity of mine should hinder an event which will give so much delight to every member of my family? No! away foolish forms, and useless dull delays! I here devote myself to your service!'

"'You are very obliging, Mrs Meddleton. Would you do me the favour to name as early a day as, after consulting your niece, you conveniently can?'

"'Niece!' she exclaimed; 'I consult no niece, nor brother, nor any one but myself. Whatever day is most agreeable to you, you will find no impediment cast in the way by any one in this family.'

"'You are very kind. I will let you know in a few days, as soon as I shall have completed my preparations. In the mean time, I will just finish this bottle, and join the party in the lawn.'

"'Do; do, my captain!' exclaimed the lady, with the tears actually standing in her eyes.

"'I am sorry, Mrs Meddleton, I am not a captain, as you call me. A plain lieutenant's wife is all the rank I can offer.'

"'Happier in that capacity than as a general's lady—polite, courteous, enchanting!'

"'Well, madam, I may consider every thing satisfactorily settled?'

"'Yes—all, my Withers!'

"'Deuce take your Withers,' I muttered, and bolted out of the room.

"I and young Walton remained to sup with the family that night. Love, I am sure, is a very healthful occupation; for I never ate with so ravenous an appetite in my life. Ham, turkey, tongue, disappeared in no time; and as for drinking, hang me if I thought old Jenkins and I should ever have done swigging vast tumblers to each other's health. In fact,

the old gentleman got as drunk as a lord. I can't say I myself was particularly sober; and the young Oxonian, though I perceived he shyed the bottle every time it came round, sang, and laughed, and reeled about as if he had been mad. I could not help thinking there was some little sham in it; but I thought if he was such an ass as to affect being merry, when he might be so in reality, the loss was his not mine. Not a word was said on the subject of my offer. The ladies seemed both a little confused at old Jenkins's inuendoes, and retired early to bed. We went on drinking to a late hour; and when I offered to go away, my old friend would not hear of the proposal.

"'Body-o'-me, man! we don't turn near relations out at this hour o' the night. You shall sleep here, you shall. Frank can toddle home to the parsonage in a jiffy; but for you, my boy, you sha'n't stir a step! We'll have another tumbler, and this segar—so, good night, Frank, my boy.'

"Walton got up to leave us. As I went with him to the door, and shook hands at parting, he whispered that he had intended to ask a favour of me in return for the use he had been of in my behalf. 'What is it?' I said.

"'Oh, nothing—nothing; only if there's an alarm of housebreakers to-night, don't disturb yourself—'tis only a frolic of mine.'

"'What! Sally is it?—wild rogue—I'll sleep as sound as Orpheus—off with you.'

"And away he went. In a short time after his departure, old Jenkins really became so foolish and unintelligible, that I was very glad when his old servant, William, came in to huddle him off to bed. I took my candle, and as I knew the house pretty well, no one thought of showing me the way. I confess my exertions had scarcely been less than those of my future father-in-law, but luckily I had a stronger head. As I stalked with all the steadiness I could muster along the passage, I came suddenly,—at a side window which looked out upon the lawn,—upon the beautiful Julia herself. 'Heavens!' I cried, 'how lucky I am!'

"'Hush,' she said, you'll alarm the house.'

"'And what are you doing here, my pretty one?—dress-

ed, too, as if for a promenade,—you ought to have been sound asleep an hour ago.'

"'I was tempted by this beautiful moon,' she said,—(the devil a moon I could see),—'but now I am hurrying off as fast as I can.'

"I seized her hand as she attempted to pass me, and devoured it with kisses as gallantly as the hero of a novel. She pulled it suddenly, and rather angrily away from me.

"'For shame, Captain Withers,' she said, holding up her finger upbraidingly, 'what would my aunt say?'

"'Your aunt, my dear Julia, may say whatever her old silly tongue thinks proper, but as for you and me, my darling'——

"The young lady had disappeared, and I made such an unconscionable lurch as I enacted the lover, that I nearly put out my candle. I went to bed, and in about a couple of minutes was as fast as Gibraltar.

"I can't tell you how long I had been asleep, when I thought I heard a voice several times calling on me to get up. I recollected my promise to young Walton, and slipping up as gently as possible, and groping my way in the pitch darkness to the door, I turned the key without the slightest noise, and got quietly into my warm crib again. I had not been well asleep the second time, when such a devil of a row was kicked up in the passage, that it was impossible even to pretend not to be disturbed. I heard old Jenkins, scarcely recovered from the effects of his potations, hilloaing at the top of his voice for Julia—then a prodigious knocking at another door in the passage, and exclamations for 'Sister!—Sister Meddleton!' In a moment my door was attacked as if by a battering-ram. 'Withers! Captain Withers! for God sake answer if you are within!—Julia and her aunt have disappeared—open the door.'

"Thus adjured, I could not refuse; I opened the door, and in walked old Jenkins, and William close behind him, while two or three of the maid-servants peeped in with the utmost anxiety from the passage.

"'Hilloa, what's the matter?' I said. 'Is the house robbed?'

"'Robbed!' replied old Jenkins, 'I fear it is. Julia is no where to be found. Her clothes have all disappeared. I strongly suspect she has eloped.'

"'Impossible!' I cried, greatly perplexed; 'after what happened yesterday, it would be madness to suspect it.'

"'My sister, too, is no where to be found.'

"'Ha, ha,' I cried, 'that's too much of a joke. Do you think any body has run off with *her*, too?'

"'There's no saying.'

"'I'll warrant ye against that. Who the deuce would take the trouble to carry off such a silly chattering piece of rubbish?'

"'She's certainly very silly,' replied my friend; but then she is so confoundedly romantic;—and you yourself, Captain Withers, made proposals for her not many hours ago.'

"'For *her?*—For Mrs Meddleton? by the Powers! you are facetious this morning. What! *I* make proposals for *her?* such a queer, old, ridiculous vixen as that?'

"And why not, sir?' cried the lady herself, coming out from behind the curtain at the foot of my bed!—'old, indeed?—ridiculous?—silly?'

"Old Jenkins nearly fainted at this unexpected apparition.—'Captain Withers,' he said, 'this is too much. You shall answer for this, sir. What business has that lady in your bedroom?'

"'Upon my soul, I should like very much if you would ask her. I'll take my oath it was not by *my* invitation,' said I.

"'I'll tell you all about that,' said the lady, casting disdainful looks all the time at me; 'on the first alarm of Julia's elopement, I rushed into the passage, not knowing what I did; and anxious to get Captain Withers' assistance, I opened his door and called him; he was sound asleep, I went up to him and called louder and louder, but he seemed to take no notice. All of a sudden, he jumped out of bed, and ran and bolted the door. What was I to do? I hid myself behind the curtain till you came in,—and now to hear what the wretch says of me behind my back—false, inconstant, cruel, O! O! O!"

" ' I don't believe a word of all this story of yours,' said old Jenkins.—' Captain Withers, you are a rascal, sir. You have abused my hospitality, and dishonoured my family,—you shall pay for it, sir; you are a villain'——

" ' Very well, old gentleman,' I said, having now finished dressing, ' go on as much as you like, I shall have the honour, the moment I can procure a friend, of shooting you as dead as a herring. I certainly took a fancy to your daughter, and asked your consent to let me marry her. You said you were very happy—this old lady said the same;—but till we have had a meeting, of course all negotiations are at an end.'

" ' We shall have no meeting, sir, rest assured of that, unless in presence of a jury,' he replied. I put on my hat, and walked quietly out of the house, leaving the old lady with her face hidden in her handkerchief, crying out, ' Oh my character, my poor character!—lost—ruined—miserable—undone!'

" Well, gentlemen,"—continued Withers, " I suppose you all guess what was the real truth of the matter. Walton and Julia had gone off together, getting me into a deuce of a scrape by their folly. Old Jenkins forgave them with all his heart, as he was anxious for their evidence against me. They raised an action of damages for breach of promise of marriage. The widow was examined by the jury at great length. She swore to them I had asked her to marry—not in precise words, for I was the most silent gentleman she had ever met with—but that I had told her, I sighed for a friend's company—meaning her by the word ' friend.' I was only a lieutenant then, you'll remember, and had some thoughts of giving Jack Morrell the difference for a captaincy in the line.

" Old Armageddon swore that I had certainly given him to understand that I was soon to be a brother of Mr Jenkins's.

" Julia herself declared that she had looked upon her aunt as the cause of my frequent visits to their cottage, and related conversations, which she had understood in quite a different way from what I had meant them.

" Walton swore that I informed him positively I was going to marry Mrs Meddleton.

" But when old Jenkins told them, in addition to all that

the others had said, the story of her being found, under very suspicious circumstances, in my bedroom, the whole jury rose up in an agony of indignation, returned a verdict for the full amount of the damages, and expressed great sorrow they had not been laid at a higher sum. What could twelve low fellows, shut up in a box, know of promises of marriage, tender feelings, harrowing distress, and all the nonsense a chattering fellow in a wig talked to them about? But still they nabbed me, you'll perceive. I had to pay two thousand pounds, besides a great deal more for expenses. I gave up my castellated cottage, used great exertions to get on full pay, and have never from that day to this said a civil word to a woman, especially to a widow."

"Did you call old Jenkins out?" said Somers.

"Oh, the old fellow would not come;—but, drink on, my boys, and ask me no more questions. I've told you the whole of my story, and not another syllable shall you get from me to-night."

CHAPTER III.

The conversation, shortly after the very unusual loquacity of Captain Withers, became of a very miscellaneous and undistinguishable character. The last contribution to the conviviality of the evening, of which I retain any recollection, was an attempt made by a respectable-looking gentleman, who I afterwards understood was staff-surgeon of the district, to sing "Love among the Roses." Before, however, he had arrived at the Paphian Bower, his chair—perhaps enchanted by his strains, as of old the trees were by the notes of Orpheus—was seized with such an unaccountable fit of restlessness and activity, that, in spite of all his efforts to retain his seat, it fairly shook him off in the middle of a quaver, and deposited him unhurt upon the floor. I found that this mobility of the furniture was becoming rapidly contagious, and

being warned in time by the extreme unsteadiness of the seat I occupied, I made a silent retreat to the hospitalities of "mine inn," and found Boots of no inconsiderable assistance in piloting the way to bed. The man—as Dr Johnson says, or something very like it,—who would know the utmost felicities of the human stomach, must give his nights to drinking, and his mornings to soda water. I forget whether he mentions a thimbleful of brandy as an ingredient in the latter enjoyment; but if he does not, the omission is greatly to be deplored. Refreshed and renovated by a night of uninterrupted and uninterruptible sleep, I found myself next morning blest with the most praiseworthy oblivion of my alderman-like performances of the preceding day. I was tolerably confident that, in the natural course of things, I must have dined—and in all human probability, played no contemptible knife and fork—but this was entirely mere matter of induction from the unfailing regularity of my habits in these respects; for, from the actual state of my interior, I could form no idea as to the extreme remoteness of the period at which I had supplied the vacuum which nature is not more bitter in her abhorrence of than myself. It might have been weeks or months since I had tasted food—I might, for any thing I knew to the contrary, have been fasting since the hour of my birth—at all events, I felt as hungry as a whole covey of ostriches, and adjourned to the breakfast-table—groaning under its weight of mutton-chops, veal-pies, cold salmon, and broiled beef-steaks—with the utmost rapidity in my power. I need not enlarge upon my performances on that occasion, nor upon all the other employments of the day. We rode and walked, dived into confectioners' shops, ate ice like a herd of Nova Zembla bears, and found ourselves at dinner-time in a delightful state of appetite and coolness. My friend, Captain Withers, was in the chair, and I now found out the mistake I had made in attributing the hilarity of the previous evening to the presidency of so jolly a companion as Colonel O'Looney. In fact, to-night, we were, if possible, still more jovial in our mirth. The captain, with an inimitable gravity, did the honours of the table; his words were few, but admirably well applied; there were no general remarks in his con-

versation, no fine drawn theories, or even any distant allusion to any thing but the business in hand. The fish, the soup, the veal, the beef, all passed in review before him; and a decision upon their respective merits, conveyed in such words as "good," "exquisite," "fresh," without any other flourish or circumlocution, had a more decided effect in replenishing the plates of his guests than the most laboured panegyric. When we came to the withdrawal of the table-cloth, and an innumerous array of glasses and decanters made their appearance on the board, we missed, indeed, for a while at first, the inspiring countenance of the colonel; but after a few minutes even this regret vanished before the silent eloquence of the melancholy countenance, and full bumper, of Captain Withers. To-day several strangers were of the party—some military and some civil. The person who sat on the chairman's left was a very handsome soldier-like fellow, of two or three and thirty. I knew, from my experience of the day before, that any one so near Withers was in no danger of perishing of thirst, and I watched the effect of the president's suggestions, expecting some amusement from the mode in which the stranger would receive his very friendly and very monotonous admonitions. The stranger, however, seemed to take them all in very good part, and succeeded, I thought, rather better than I had done, in drawing him into a more general conversation. At all events, he appeared to be of a very talkative humour himself, and altogether seemed as jolly a fellow as one would wish to meet with on a summer's, or any other day.

"Who knows what has become of old Harry Mead of the Engineers?" said some one down the table.

"Gone to India," said the stranger, whose name, by the by, was Major Newby—"he is examining all the forts from Bungalaswarra Dwâb to Bangalore, or some such names, for it's of no use to be correct to a syllable or two."

"And his brother?"

"The collegian? the wit? the poet, Sam Mead? why he was within an ace of coming with me when I started from home."

"I wish he had come," replied the other. "Is he as modest and handsome as he used to be?"

"Just the same—his teeth as brilliantly black, his hair as ruby red, and his opinion of his appearance and genius as humble and lowly as ever."

"Poor Sam! I wish we had him here—he is as good as a puppet-show."

"He was really of so much use to me," replied the major —"though, by the by, his kindness was by no means premeditated—that I can't bear to have him so unmercifully laughed at as he used to be, when he joined our mess."

"What! Sam Mead of use to any one?—how?—relate—enlighten."

"Just thus—but I'll tell you the whole story, for most of us, I think, know Sam Mead, and it is no secret, so far as I am concerned. I was stationed, in the year eighteen hundred and twenty-nine, in the ancient town of Coventry. It is, beyond all doubt, as dull a town as there is any occasion for in a Christian country, and I should think the suicides were pretty considerable there in the course of the summer months. However, as I had nothing else to do—as there was no possibility even of getting into debt, I managed, as the second best thing in my power, to fall vehemently in love. Sir Orlando Blunt had a house a few miles from the town; he was an old militia officer, a retired Cockney, and very fond of war and warriors—as pompous and stupid as a turkey-cock.

"'He had gold in his coffers—he had sheep, he had kine:
And one bonny lassie—his darlin' and mine!'

"Sophia was as pretty a girl as any one requires to fall in love with in country quarters, and after dining with her a few times, and knowing her a little better, I thought it well worth standing the prosy nothings of the old fellow to have half an hour's chat with the daughter; in short, what I had intended for a few weeks' amusement, actually in a few days degenerated into real affection. I became the laughing-stock of the mess—my vivacity disappeared, and I was as drooping and sentimental as if I had been a poet. My spirits became still more depressed when Sophia told me that they were going for two months to Leamington. Leamington was no great way off, to be sure, but then I had become attached

to the solitude of the country, which had been so irksome and disagreeable at first. Trees, and streams, and shady walks, are great helps to a man in love; there seems something very ridiculous in sighing within sight of a lamp-post, or whispering soft things in front of a mercer's shop. But, alas! my regrets were of no avail, and in a few days I was invited to a farewell dinner at Maldon Court. I went very early—so early, that my visit answered both for a morning call and the evening party. Old Sir Orlando was out somewhere in the park. Now or never is the time, thought I; so, without a moment's hesitation, I made my declaration. I had only time to hear her say something about objections and her father, when that old blockhead came blundering into the room.

"'Major Newby, your most subservient. This is really very kind. Ah! we military fellows know the advantage of being at our posts in time. When I was in the North Warwick, punctuality, said I, my lads, punctuality is the soul of business.'

"'Very true, sir,' said I, while Sophia made a quiet retreat from the room.

"'There is something, my dear major, in the habits of an old military officer, which it is very difficult to forget—a sort of upright stiff carrying of the head, straightness of the back —I can't get quit of them in spite of all my attempts.'

"Now it was quite impossible to resist laughing at this. He was a little red-faced old fellow, with five or six chins rolling half way down his waistcoat, his back bent like a scimitar, and a couple of legs like the sides of the letter O. I must also tell you that he had acquired all his fortune, and gained his knighthood, in trade, and made the most ludicrous mistakes between his recollections of the militia regiment and the counting-house. Accordingly, I laughed till I could hardly stand at hearing his description of his figure and carriage, but he was blessed with a most happy unconsciousness of the possibility of his ever being ridiculous.

"'Tis true, upon my honour,' he continued; 'and in my addresses to the regiment, I frequently told them to look at myself for a model. Look at me, my lads, says I; look at

me. Now, mark me, uprightness is the best policy—now square your columns straight, and file off by the rule of three.'

"'I have no doubt, Sir Orlando, they made excellent soldiers; but isn't it time for us to retire and beautify? the evening approaches.'

"'Ah! quite right, major, we of the martial department mustn't neglect the twilight—halt! dress!'

"And off I marched to my twilight, as he called it, wondering how such an insufferably silly old individual could be the father of my beautiful little Sophia. Well, we dined; half a hundred of the county people were there, who doubtless laughed at the vanities of Sir Orlando almost as heartily as they eat his venison and drank his champagne. I had no other opportunity all that night of advancing my suit, or even getting an intelligible reply to the proposal I had made. Objection! I thought, what could her objection be? for I was pretty well convinced it did not arise from herself; and accordingly I determined to ride over on the following morning, and open the trenches in form before the old governor.

"'Sir Orlando,' I said, on making my *adieux*, 'will you allow me to wait on you to-morrow morning to request a favour?'

"'Favour! my gallant friend,' he replied, 'any thing I can assist you in our way (we of the sword, you know, major, ought to be brotherly), I shall be happy to do. What is't about?'

"'I may presume, I hope, upon your acquaintance, and upon all you have seen and heard of my conduct, and from the predilection you have expressed for my company, to ask you to review'——

"'Review!' he cried out, interrupting me, 'with all my heart. Come early to-morrow and we'll settle it all. A soldier's life's the life for me. Your company, Major Newby, I must say, is admirable—I have the highest respect for your company—be here in time—good-night.'

"I could not stay and explain to him what I meant, especially as the party had not yet entirely gone; and delaying all farther explanation till the morning, I jumped into my

Stanhope, and drove home. Next morning I again presented myself at the Court, and was most kindly received.

"'Right, right,' said the old noodle, as he shook me by the hand, 'you come to the office, punctually at your hour, like a true son of Mars. Ah! when I was in the North Warwick'——

"'I have come, sir,' I began, 'to ask a very great favour of you indeed.'

"'Speak on, major, I'll grant it.'

"'You passed very high encomiums on my company last night. I hope it has not been disagreeable to any member of your family.'

"'Not a bit, not a bit; my little Sophia is delighted with it; tinsel, and gewgaws, and frippery, you know, major, have great charms in the eyes of a girl of eighteen.'

"I bowed very low to this compliment, and could not divine what the old fellow was driving at. 'Then I may hope, sir,' I added, 'on your favourable report at head-quarters?'

"'I doubt it not, major; indeed, I think I may say I haven't the least doubt of it; but isn't a little previous examination necessary?'

"'Certainly,' I said, 'I am glad you come so honestly to the point at once.'

"'Ah! quite my way, I assure ye. When I was in the North Warwick'——

"'I shall be happy to lay every statement in my power before you.'

"'Ay, ay, I must look to your equipments,—to your effective force, as it were.'

"'You are very good, sir; if the amount is not so great as you might expect for Miss Sophia'——

"'Poh! never mind her. How the deuce should she know any thing of such matters? I consider it very kind in you to think of her at all. She will certainly join with me in inspecting the state of your corpse.'

"'Heaven forbid!' I said, wondering what the old booby could mean by thinking I was so soon to be in the land of the leal.

"'Well, well—you will only be a skeleton, we know; but we'll make allowances for that'—he said very condescendingly.

"'Upon my honour, Sir Orlando, you are too good—I hope not to be disembodied quite so soon.'

"'I hope not—though it must be very pleasant too. I assure you I have been very happy since it happened to me.'

"'Since what happened, sir?' said I, as soothingly as I could, being now thoroughly persuaded that the fat goggle-eyed little monster had become seriously deranged.

"'Why, since I was disembodied to be sure—but I still retain the warmest recollections of my former life—

> 'He cares not for sorrow whenever it comes,
> But rattles away to the sound of the drums,
> With a row de dow, row de dow.'

"'Sir Orlando,' I said, as the old gentleman went marching round the room, 'I came here to request that you would give me leave'——

"'Yes, major, I know it—go on.'

"'That you would give me leave to lay myself at the feet of your daughter.'

"He stopped short in the joyous chuckle with which he had heard me, rubbing his hands all the time, and looking as important as a bantam on a wall.

"'Lay yourself *where*, sir?' he said, 'is it this you have been thinking of all this while?'

"'Yes, it certainly is the object of my visit here this morning.'

"'And you did not come to ask me, as a senior officer, residing in the neighbourhood, to review your company—to inspect your corpse, to give a favourable report of you at headquarters?'

"'No, sir, I never thought of asking you to do any thing of the kind.'

"'Then, by Mars, Major Newby, you may lay yourself in a ditch, or hang yourself on a tree—but what the devil do you want with my daughter? Good morning, Major Newby.'

"As I went out of the hall, I heard the disappointed and angry little man holloing out to his valet, 'John! you need

not mind about brushing up my uniform, and go and tell Rogers to put the sabre on its nail in the hall—I have changed my mind.'

"This explained all the queernesses I had discovered in our conversation, and though I was somewhat nettled at his impertinence, still, as I had no intention of marrying *him*, I consoled myself with the resolution of revenging myself by running off with his daughter on the very first opportunity.

"There were few days upon which I failed to present myself in the spacious streets of Leamington. The quiet walks in the neighbourhood, and the license of a fashionable watering place, gave me many opportunities of meeting my pretty little Sophia without the superintendence of her troublesome papa. Every thing went on as favourably as I could wish, and I was hugging myself on my good fortune, when one day, on turning round a corner, I ran bump on a little fellow as he stood gazing up into the sky. I had scarcely time to catch him in my arms, and keep him from tumbling into the gutter, when the voice exclaiming, 'Caitiff, for this thou diest!' and an inimitable twist of the eye, assured me it was none other than my poetical friend Sam Mead. Our recognition was mutual.—'Sam, my boy,' I said, 'what are you doing here, gaping up like an astronomer?—there are no stars to be seen in the daytime.'

"'False, false, and foolish philosophy,' replied Sam; 'to the inward eye of poetical contemplation, stars are at all times visible; but, by Apollo! my dear Newby, there's a new planet in Leamington—so clear, so bright, so beautiful'——

"'And her name?' I enquired.

"'Venus, of course. Her ordinary designation in the ears of the profane is vulgar—I call her Potosi.'

"'Miss Potosi; that seems rather a queer name for a planet; where is her seat in heaven?'

"'In the train of Ursa Major—a wretched ugly bandy-legged little star, whom the vulgar denominate her father.'

"'And his name upon earth?'

"'Is Blunt—Sir Orlando Blunt.'

"'The devil it is!—and Miss Potosi, the planet, is his daughter, I suppose?'

"'Thou hast it. Ah, Newby, what a fund of poetry and association there is even in a surname, if people will only take the trouble to find it out! There, now, is the name of Blunt—what is Blunt? Isn't it money? And Potosi—what does it contain? Money too. Don't you see the reason I have christened her my Mexico, my Peru, my Potosi?'

"'Oh, very plainly—are you acquainted with the lady?'

"'Not what the uninitiated would call acquainted—but mark me, we are not strangers to each other—we never spoke, to be sure; but then the eye, Newby—it is a great thing in a man's favour to have an expressive eye!'

"Sam looked at me, when he said this, with such a diabolical expression of impudence and conceit, that I had the greatest inclination to chuck him into the Leam.

"'That is an advantage, Sam, which you certainly possess. Few people can doubt your meaning, if they once take notice of your look.'

"'*She* does, depend on't. She never sees me without a very odd quickening of her pace, and an attempt to escape my glances—but she's fascinated in spite of all her efforts.'

"'Does she know your name—who you are—or any thing about you?'

"'How should I know? but I suppose so. Those watering places are so inquisitive, that if any one, out of the common way, makes his appearance for half-an-hour, it is known all over the town in a moment. I flatter myself I have made a sensation.'

"'I have no doubt you have. What do you intend to do?'

"'What about? About my Potosi? Work the mine, to be sure. Write a sonnet or two to the lady, and a letter on business to the old man. I should think very little more would be requisite to have all the success I want.'

"'You had better make haste, then, Sam, for I am given to understand they leave Leamington to-morrow morning, and return to Maldon Court.'

"'Whew! better and better. This looks something like an adventure. I'll follow them in disguise. I'll drop odes and elegies on her path in the secluded walks of the park—

'twill be admirable. The Marquis of Exeter was an ingenious fellow—I wonder if he wrote verses?'

"'I don't know whether he did that, but you know he married "sweet Helen, our hamlet's pride," in the disguise of a rustic, and she wakened one morning a marchioness.'

"'Well, Potosi won't waken a marchioness, to be sure, but she'll marry me in the disguise of a wandering obscure, in fact, almost a fool; and she'll waken some morning the wife of a very disting——in short, *my* wife.'

"The devil she will, thought I, as I scarcely knew whether to laugh or be angry; but it is useless telling you any more of the conversation of little Sam Mead, who is, without exception, the most ugly snobbish-looking fellow in all England.

"Sophia had told me that her father was summoned home on very disagreeable business; and in a few days from the time I met Sam Mead, the incendiaries began their horrible work all over that part of the country; we were kept so busy, marching hither and thither, in pursuit of the miscreants, that I had no time to think of my Dulcinea, and still less to waste a moment on the vapouring of my ridiculous friend. The service we were on was very harassing, and so many applications were made for our assistance, either to disperse the agricultural labourers, who met in several places in very large numbers, or to protect the property of the unpopular farmers and gentlemen in the neighbourhood, that I had very few men left at my disposal. One night, however, I received a note addressed 'To the officer commanding at Coventry,' something to the following purport: 'Sir Orlando Blunt is sorry to be obliged to ask a favour of Major Newby; but Sir O.'s household is in such a state of alarm during the present disturbed condition of the country, that Sir O. will thank Major N. for the loan of five men and a corporal, to remain for a few nights in the house. Sir O. is an old military man himself, and will take the command in person.'

"This was far too good an opportunity to be lost, as you may suppose, and half an hour saw me on my way, with half-a-dozen of my steadiest dragoons, to take on us the defence of Maldon Court. A rattling trot brought us to the spot in a very short time, and as I knew the ci-devant militiaman re-

tained more of the counter than of the hero in his composition, I fixed on my line of action in a moment. I drew up my men in grand form in the quadrangle of the court, and took military possession of the premises. Up the hall I marched, scarcely attending to the reception I received from the gallant knight,—merely assuring him, that I thought his house such a central point for my diversified demonstrations, that I relied on him, as a loyal subject of the King, to give my men the best accommodation in his power.

"The 'diversified demonstrations' did the business at once; and, besides, he was in such a prodigious fright, that at that moment there was no favour he would have ventured to refuse me.

"'You have sent, Sir Orlando Blunt,' I began very formally—'you have sent for the protection of his Majesty's forces; may I ask on what specific information you ground your apprehension of danger?'

"'Major Newby—sir, you speak to the point. I was too hot perhaps the last time we met in this hall, but military blood, you know, is soon fired—ha! mercy, what's that?'

"'It is nothing but a door slamming, sir; don't be alarmed.'

"'Alarmed, sir! what do you mean? When I was in the North Warwick'——

"'Do you apprehend any immediate attack?' I said.

"'God knows what I apprehend—but, certainly, in the present state of the country, I think, unless I had been happily of a very courageous temper, I should have been terribly alarmed with the threatenings I have received.'

"'In what shape have you been threatened, sir?'

"'By letters,' he replied—'here is one.' And he took an elegantly folded paper out of his pocket, and handed it across the table.

"I could scarcely keep my gravity the moment I saw the hand. It was an epistle from my friend Sam. It was in these words—

"'O thou, for whose hand this simple composition is intended, I hereby vow and swear, that I shall not rest satisfied till I have kindled a flame that shall revenge me for the

sufferings I have experienced in your service. The obduracy of your heart has driven me to distraction—but persist no longer in such behaviour; for by the light that plays in heaven's fiery orb, I'll tear thy heart out of thy bosom, and place it next my own! You have no common man to deal with! My character is a compound of the earthquake and the alligator. But if you will come to my terms, and give me every thing I require—heart, soul, mind, and body—you shall have no truer slave and servant than your incognito Amoroso.'

"'This is certainly a most alarming production, Sir Orlando,' I said, as I returned him the paper.

"'Alarming! I'm glad to hear you say so, Major Newby. Sir, when so gallant an officer confesses he is alarmed, I am not ashamed to confess that I have been in the most painful state of agitation ever since I received it. In fact, I have been in a cold sweat the whole time.'

"'What should you recommend me to do in the first instance? Miss Sophia, I hope, is not alarmed?'

"'Not so much so as she ought to be. I have ordered her to restrict herself to her room.' This he said with a very peculiar look; but I easily saw he was terribly afraid I should desert him, and leave him in the hands of the incendiaries, if he offered the smallest opposition to my wishes.

"'I'm sorry, Sir Orlando, that the etiquette of the service, and the weighty responsibility I have taken on myself, will not allow me to dispense with an examination of every member of your household. I must request the pleasure of a few minutes' conversation with the lady, as I am by no means convinced that she cannot throw some light upon the mysterious letter you have now shown me.'

"'Sir—Major Newby—I can't help thinking it is an extraordinary mode of proceeding'——

"'Very well, sir, then I must relieve myself of all responsibility. I shall return to Coventry immediately.'

"'No, no. The diabolical villain talks of tearing my heart out, and kindling flames—but tell me—*must* you see Sophia?'

"I bowed.

"'Well, I suppose you must; but when I was in the North Warwick'——

"'May I see the young lady this instant?' I interposed.

"'Certainly,' he said; 'if you *must*, you *must*.' And he gave directions for Miss Sophia to be summoned.

"When she entered, her surprise was unbounded, and her awkwardness very manifest. The old fellow kept fidgeting about the room, and presented a most ludicrous visage, in which was very plainly to be seen a struggle going on between his inordinate fear and his offended dignity.

"'I must converse with the young lady alone, sir.'

"'The devil you must, sir! What d'ye mean to'——

"'Merely to ask the young lady a few questions in my official character as commandant for the time being of this mansion.'

"'Well,' he said, with a deep sigh; and toddled out of the room as submissively as heart could desire.

"In a few hurried words I told Sophia all that had occurred, and begged her to carry on the plot, trusting to fortune for a favourable opportunity either to obtain her father's consent, or to provide for our own happiness without it.

"'Worse and worse!' cried the old man, bundling into the room. 'We shall all infallibly be murdered. Save us—oh! save us, my dear Major, and ask any thing that is in my power to give you.' He no longer affected to conceal his fears, but walked up and down in a most particular state of agitation, after throwing another note upon the table, with a look of blank despair. I opened the letter. 'There is no hope of your escape'—it ran thus—'My toils are spread sure to catch you! This very night I'll come up to your window, and slip a composition into your chamber that will realise my hopes. Then, my Potosi, the vulgar name of Blunt shall be blotted out for ever; and, oh! how sweet to purchase the gratification of becoming your lord and master, though with the surrender of my liberty; ay! though I forfeited life itself. At twelve to-night—the witching hour—I'll come with uncumbered followers in my train. Hope shall place the ladder, Love shall light the torch, and then you shall see the success of my plans. Adieu!'

"'There! did you ever hear of such a cold-blooded cut-throat in your life.?" said the knight, with the most rue-

ful countenance. 'This very night he's coming at twelve o'clock with an innumerable train—the whole labourers in the parish—and that drunken fellow Hope is going to bring a ladder, and one of the Loves is going to set fire to the house. I always thought it would come to this, when their father took to keeping a licensed beer-shop. Dear, dear! what are we to do?'

"'It seems to me a very serious matter,' I replied. 'Our force, servants and all, consists of no more than ten or eleven men—Yourself, Sir Orlando'——

"'Me! for God's sake don't talk of me! No, major, my fighting days are over. When I was in the North Warw'——

"'Oh, never mind the North Warwick, but give me leave to make all the arrangements. I'll undertake to save you all, without the loss of a man.'

"'You will? are you sure of it? Do, and I'll refuse you nothing.'

"'Well, sir, I here take Miss Sophia to witness your promise—hark! what sound is that?' At that moment I thought I heard a slight movement outside; and sure enough, on going to the window of the library, I heard a violin playing some die-away Italian melody, at a little distance from where I stood. The knight and Sophia had followed me into the room. 'There they come,' said Sir Orlando, in a deuce of a fright; 'how strong they must be to come up so boldly! Shall I call the men?'

"'No—leave me to manage.' I went out, and sent a very steady old fellow, the corporal, with a couple of soldiers, to seize the serenader, and, after a little scuffle, they succeeded in bringing him into the hall.

"I give you my honour I never saw such a ludicrous scene in my life. There was Sam tightly grasped by the collar by two prodigious soldiers, his fiddle kept as a trophy by the corporal—Sir Orlando still in a state of immense alarm—and Sophia and myself ready to sink with suppressed laughter.

"'You thief! you dog! you cut-throat!' the knight began, 'what the devil do you want, prowling about at this time of the night?'

"'Thou knowest not, old man, the person you address,' replied Sam, not recognising me.

"'Hold him fast, my men,' continued Sir Orlando; 'he is the ugliest, most diabolical-looking villain I ever beheld. What's your name? Where do you come from?'

"'My name is not altogether unknown. Impressed with a vision of celestial beauty, I bowed before the shrine of a goddess who'——

"'Come, come, you infernal rick-burning rascal, none of your ranting nonsense—tell me what brought you here—did you write these letters?'

"'I did.'

"'And you still stand to their contents?'

"'I do.'

"'What! all that about Hope planting a ladder, and Love bringing the torch?'

"'Yes; I thought you would not persist long in your unkindness.'

"'Now, tell me this—remember that a timely confession may ensure your being transported'——

"'Delightful hope! sir, I will answer anything!'

"'Well, now the Love that was to set fire to the premises, was it John Love, or his brother Edward?'

"'Sir!' exclaimed Sam, apparently more enraged at his metaphor being mistaken, than at any thing else that had been said, 'twas an allegorical enumeration of the passions that boiled within my bosom!'

"'Ho! so you won't answer any more questions? you won't peach? Well, Major Newby, you will write down as much as he has confessed. My blood creeps at the very sight of such a brutal ugly-faced scoundrel.'

"'Major Newby!' exclaimed Sam, 'did I hear the name of Major Newby? Ah, Frank, my dear fellow, do tell your myrmidons to lift their profane claws from my neckcloth.'

"'The fellow's mad,' exclaimed Sir Orlando. 'Don't go near him, Major Newby—he'll bite you, to a certainty.

"I now stept forward, and could not have the cruelty to carry on the joke any farther. I explained my acquaintance with Sam as well as I was able. The knight did not know

how to behave on the occasion. His happiness at finding his fears unfounded, was almost counterbalanced by his regret at having his cowardice discovered. However, he made a compromise between the two. He acted as if there ought to be some tacit agreement to sink the whole concern in oblivion. He could not with any propriety draw back from the promise he had given, and in a few weeks after Sam's memorable serenade on a broken fiddle, I was married to the knight's only daughter, and only child. We get on as happily together as possible. I never interrupt him in his long rigmaroles about the North Warwick Militia, and have even learned not to laugh too openly when he boasts of his gallant achievement in capturing a tremendous incendiary with his own hand, in the year eighteen hundred and twenty-nine, which he calls the year of the conflagrations."

Major Newby's story was very well received, though I must say I thought it bad taste to make such a fool of his old father-in-law; but it seemed more as if it were intended to give effect to his story, than the result of any ill feeling towards the gallant knight. During the course of the narrative we had been by no means idle, as was plainly perceptible by the increased loquacity of the party the moment Major Newby was silent. A quiet old gentleman, a civilian, of about sixty years of age, entered into conversation with me across the table. His tongue betrayed him in a moment to be a Scotchman, now that he was a little thawed by the warming influences of the better half of a bottle, though, before that, he had managed to conceal his accent so successfully, that I had set him down in my own mind for a fresh importation from Tipperary. Your Scotchman, when he is very sober and on his guard, talks no intelligible language under the sun; the English look with blank amazement on his most oratorical attempts, he all the while fancying he is giving them a copious flood from the pure stream of English undefiled; it is only when he descends from his high horse that he becomes rational and agreeable. No Scotchman that one meets with south of the Tweed is worth a

moment's conversation till he has drunk himself into his mother tongue; and I will say this for them, I never met with any one who was not perfectly ready to qualify himself by even a more extended libation. But this old gentleman I spoke of seemed really to be a very nice, pleasant sort of fellow; and after a little palaver upon a variety of subjects, we began to talk about robberies, and other adventures on the road. He seemed to have studied the Newgate Calendar with the greatest attention; he knew the names and offences of every poor devil that had danced upon nothing for the last hundred years. I began to fancy, at last, I had got into conversation with Mr Wontner, at the least, if not with Jack Ketch himself. I conclude he must have been some lawyer, but such a fellow for murders and housebreakings I never heard in my life. There was one story he told me, which he took his oath was by no means a lie—if it was, that is his business, not mine. The rest of the company had become interested in some of the anecdotes he had related, and we all listened very attentively as he told us of a very curious adventure which had happened within his own knowledge.

"About thirty years ago," he said, "my friend Mr B——, having at that time newly commenced business in Edinburgh, was returning on horseback from the city to a cottage he had near Cramond. It was a wild night in November, and though he usually took the seaside as the shortest way home, he resolved this evening, on account of the increasing darkness, to keep on the high-road. When he had proceeded about three miles from the town, and had come to the loneliest part of the way, he was suddenly arrested by a man, who sprung out of a small copse at the road-side, and seized the bridle of his horse. Mr B. was a man of great calmness and resolution, and asked the man the reason of his behaviour, without betraying the smallest symptom of agitation. Not so the assailant. He held the bridle in his hand, but Mr B. remarked that it trembled excessively.

"After remaining some time, as if irresolute what to do, and without uttering a word, he let go his hold of the rein,

and said in a trembling voice, ‘ Pass on, sir, pass on,’—and then he added, ‘ I thank God, I am yet free from crime.’

“ Mr B. was struck with the manner and appearance of the man, and said, ‘ I fear you are in distress—is there any thing in which a stranger can assist you?’

“ ‘ *Strangers* may, perhaps,’ replied the man in a bitter tone, ‘ for nothing is to be hoped from *friends*.’

“ ‘ You speak, I hope, under some momentary feeling of disappointment.’

“ Pass on, pass on,’ he said impatiently; ‘ I have no right to utter any complaints to you. Go home, and thank God that a better spirit withheld me from my first intention when I heard you approach—or this might have been ’——He suddenly paused.

“ ‘ Stranger,’ said Mr B., in a tone of real kindness, ‘ you say you have no right to utter your complaints to me; I have certainly no right to pry into your concerns, but I am interested, I confess, by your manner and appearance, and I frankly make you an offer of any assistance I can bestow.’

“ ‘ You know not, sir,’ replied the stranger, “ the person to whom you make so generous a proposal—a wretch stained with vices—degraded from the station he once held, and on the eve of becoming a robber—ay,’ he added, with a shudder, ‘ perhaps a murderer.’

“ ‘ I care not, I care not, for your former crimes—sufficient for me that you repent them—tell me wherein I can stand your friend.’

“ ‘ For myself, I am careless,’ replied the man; ‘ but there is one who looks to me with eyes of quiet and still unchanged affection, though she knows that I have brought her from a home of comfort to share the fate of an outcast and a beggar. I wished for *her* sake to become once more respectable, to leave a country where I am known, and to gain character, station, wealth—to all which *she* is so justly entitled, in a foreign land; but I have not a shilling in the world.’

“ He here paused, and Mr B. thought he saw him weep. He drew out his pocket-book, and unfolding a bank bill, he put it into the man’s hand, and said, ‘ Here is what I hope

will ease you from present difficulties—it is a note for a hundred pounds.'

"The man started as he received the paper, and said in a low subdued tone, 'I will not attempt to thank you, sir—may I ask your name and address?' Mr B. gave him what he required. 'Farewell, sir,' said the stranger; 'when I have expiated my faults by a life of honesty and virtue, I will pray for you; *till then*—I dare not.' Saying these words, he bounded over the hedge, and disappeared. Mr B. rode home, wondering at the occurrence; and he has often said since, that he never derived so much pleasure from a hundred pounds in his life. He related the adventure to several of his friends, but as they were not all endowed with the same generosity of spirit as himself, he was rather laughed at for his simplicity, and in the course of a few years an increasing and very prosperous business drove the transaction almost entirely from his mind. One day, however, about twelve years after the adventure, he was sitting with a few friends after dinner, when a note was put into his hand, and the servant told him that the Leith carrier had brought a hogshead of claret into the hall. He opened the note, and found it to contain an order for a hundred pounds, with interest up to that time, accompanied with the strongest expressions of gratitude for the service done to the writer long ago. It had no date, but informed him that he was happy, that he was respected, and that he was admitted partner of one of the first mercantile houses in the city where he lived. Every year the same present was continued, always accompanied with a letter. Mr B., strange to say, made no great effort to discover his correspondent. The wine, as I have good reason to know, was the finest that could be had, for many a good magnum of it have I drunk at the hospitable table of my friend. At last he died, and the secret of who the mysterious correspondent might be, seemed in a fair way of dying along with him. But my story is not yet done. When the funeral of Mr B. had reached the Greyfriars' churchyard, the procession was joined by a gentleman who got out of a very elegant carriage at the door of the church. He was a tall handsome man, about five-and-forty years of age, dressed in the deepest

mourning. There were no armorial bearings on the panels of his carriage, for I took the trouble to examine them very particularly myself. He was totally unknown to all the family; and after the ceremony, during which he appeared to be greatly affected, he went up to the chief mourner, and said, 'I hope, sir, you will excuse the intrusion of a stranger, but I could not refrain from paying the last tribute of respect to an excellent gentleman, who was at one time more my benefactor than any person living.' Saying this, he bowed, stepped quickly into his carriage, and disappeared. Now, this, I have no doubt in my own mind, was the very individual who had so much excited my curiosity. All I can say is, if he is still alive, I wish, when he dies, he would leave me his cellar of wine, for his judgment in that article, I'll be bound to say, is unimpeachable and sublime."

CHAPTER IV.

"And a very gentlemanly proper sort of a robber, upon my life," said Colonel O'Looney. "'Twould have been a pity to hang such a good judge of claret. Now the London rogues are very different. I was walking one day down into the City, and stopped for a moment to look at some pictures in a window in St Paul's churchyard. Before I had time to say Jack Robison, half-a-dozen fellows kept pushing close round me, and at last I felt a little tug at my pocket, and discovered that my purse had disappeared like lightning. I seized on the fellow who was standing next me, and intended at all events to have the pleasure of breaking every bone in his skin for my money, when a very genteel-looking young fellow came up, and says he, 'You've sustained some loss, I fear, sir?'

"'Loss!' says I, 'to be sure I have; and this little owld rascal here denies he has got my purse, though he has been close to my pocket this last quarter of an hour.'

"'May I beg,' says the gentleman again, 'may I beg to enquire if your loss is very serious?'

"'Faith it's more than I can afford, especially for so little satisfaction as only thrashing this little owld thief here.'

"'How much, may I ask, sir? I assure you I am deeply interested by your misfortune.'

"'Why, then, there was exactly fourteen sovereigns in gold, and a ten-pound Bank of England note.'

"'Are you aware of the number of the note, so as to stop it at the Bank?'

"'Not I,' said I, 'I shouldn't know the note from Adam.'

"'Then, sir,' replied my compassionate friend, 'I am very much obliged to you for your information, for that rascal Jim Scraggs, that forked your cly, swore there was nothing but five sovereigns. There are three of us in the lay, and it's just eight pounds a-piece.'

"Before I had time to double my fist and knock his brains out on the spot, he had disappeared up some dark alley. In the meantime a great crowd had collected, and the man I had seized by the collar waited very patiently till he saw a policeman, and immediately gave me in charge for an assault. On looking at the man, he really seemed a very quiet respectable sort of person, and I was sorry for having mistaken him for the thief. I apologised to him as well as I could, and offered him any compensation he chose. He swore it was a hard thing for a gentleman, though unfortunately reduced in circumstances, to be accused of robbery on the public streets, but at last consented to accept a douceur of twenty pounds. Luckily I was known at a shop in the neighbourhood, where I went and borrowed the requisite funds. The moment he got the money into his hands, he said, 'Now don't you go telling Bill Filch or Jim Scraggs about this here trifle, as it's quite a private transaction 'tween ourselves; but I must be off for my share of the twenty-four—good-by;' so that the three gentlemen made a very good thing of it, though the villains have never thought of making up for it by the smallest present."

We had a good laugh at the coolness of the poor colonel's spoilers, and the conversation again became general. Our bacchanalian labours now began to produce their usual effects,

and I confess, if any good things were said, I do not recollect them so accurately as if they had made their appearance at an earlier part of the evening. A stranger who sat near me, moved my envy exceedingly by the extraordinary power he seemed to possess of drinking and speaking at the same time. He spoke as incessantly as Major Newby, and filled his glass (and emptied it) as regularly as Captain Withers. He seemed a very nice fellow—very good-natured looking—and as I had nothing better to do, I resolved to listen for a little to what he was saying. There is something very captivating to a talkative sort of fellow in the appearance of attention. He caught my attitude of listening in a moment, and directed his conversation principally to me.

"My grandfather," he began, "who died many years ago, commander-in-chief of the Leeward Islands, received his first commission in the ——th heavy dragoons, somewhere about the year seventeen hundred and sixty. He was then quite a gay young fellow, and as romantic and ignorant of the world as youths of eighteen always are—or ought to be. This same ignorance of the world is a most ridiculous phrase, for as it means only an ignorance of the faults and wickedness which one meets with in life, it gives us to understand that there is no other kind of people in the world but thieves and liars. The old worn-out cynic, who boasts of his experience, and acts as if all men were dishonest and unworthy of one's confidence and esteem, is in reality more ignorant of the world than the young enthusiast who expects every man to be as generous and as unselfish as himself. But this is a digression. My grandfather was perhaps, if any thing, too enthusiastic; but, luckily, in the very outset of his career he became acquainted with a person, whose name is still greatly celebrated, from whom he derived considerable benefit and instruction. I need not allude to this kind preceptor more particularly at present; his usefulness will appear in the course of my story. The young soldier started from home with his pockets well filled by the liberality of his father,—a good horse below him, which was intended for one of his chargers—pistols primed and loaded at his saddlebow, and thinking himself a new Alexander going forth to conquer the

world. His servant and heavy luggage had been sent off two or three days before, and the young man anticipated great pleasure in his journey from the vale of Gloucester to Chatham, where his regiment was stationed. The first day conducted him, without any adventure, to the Black Horse at Burford—a hostel which no Oxonian of the present day will forget, if he has tasted a frothing tankard of Jemmy Stevens's beer. While he was seeing his horse properly attended to in the stable, he was struck with the remarkable appearance of a person who kept pacing to and fro in the stable-yard. He wore a long loose horseman's cloak, which completely concealed his figure; but the large silver buckles in his shoes, and a full-bottomed wig, curling a good way over his shoulders, surmounted by a little old-fashioned three-cornered hat, gave him altogether the look of some venerable relic of the days of Queen Anne. He stooped greatly as he walked, and every now and then making a dead stop, and gazing earnestly up into the sky, he muttered some strange sounds, which the young soldier could not by any means understand, and accordingly imagined to be Greek. The hostler could afford him no satisfactory information as to who the object of his curiosity was. He had only arrived an hour or two before him, and the little shaggy pony he rode was in the next stall to the magnificent charger of the youthful traveller. As he passed the stranger, in going into the house, he addressed him, in hopes of finding out something more about him. 'Good night, father,' said the young man, 'here is a most beautiful moon.'

"'Poh! don't talk of any thing beautiful standing in a stable-yard; if you were on the deck of a brave frigate on the still bosom of the Atlantic—if you were on the summit of some ruined tower, seeing its light reflected in broken patches on the lake—or glimmering on the top of breathless woods—you might talk of its being beautiful; but here, within two yards of a dunghill—faugh!—call it a full moon, or a bright moon, or a useful moon, but never mention the word beautiful.'

"'But, my dear sir,' replied the other, 'it is you and I who are in the stable-yard, and in such unromantic proxi-

mity to a dunghill, and not the moon. What you say might do very well if any person in the moon had applied the epithet to us; but I maintain, in spite of all you can advance, that the moon is a beautiful moon.'

"'Have it your own way, young man, and beautiful let it be. I am not so romantic now as I have been. Is there nothing else in the sky that you consider beautiful?'

"'Every thing—star, cloud, and vapour.'

"'But is there no star in particular? not that bright little light at the corner of that fleecy cloud—you see it?'

"'Yes.'

"'That is the only star in heaven that *you* ought to care a rush for. 'Tis yours.'

"'Mine! oho! you are an astrologer, old gentleman. I should be obliged to you for a cast of your art.'

"'I'll give it you to-morrow. To-night I must leave the starry host to take care of themselves, while I follow their example in the supper-room of the Black Horse.'

"'We'll sup together, if you have no objection,' said my grandfather, delighted to have made acquaintance with so out-of-the-way a character; and they proceeded very amicably into the house, to see what provision the larder could supply.

"The stranger still retained his horseman's cloak, and, under the plea of dim sight and old age, he ornamented his nose with a pair of large horn spectacles. His conversation was quite as curious as his appearance.

"'And so you have left your home to join the army? I thought there was something military in your air the first moment I saw you. On what day do you reach your destination?'

"'This is only Monday,' replied the young man, 'and Chatham is not above two quiet days' journey from this place.'

"'Your horse is a good one?'

"'The best in the county of Gloucester. I would not part with Brown Hamlet for fifty golden Georges.'

"'But you have made other provision for the war besides a charger? Ill fares it with the soldier at quarters who has not a purse as well as a sabre.'

"'Tut, man, I have both; but my journey has made me thirsty as well as hungry. What shall we drink?'

"'Tis all the same to me,' said the old man. 'I have been in all lands, and drank their wines at the fountainhead; but my favourite was a wine we drank deeply of when we were at Breda. 'Twas Palatinate; and Charles used to say to us his father had paid right dearly for it with a Spanish war, so it mattered little whether his son ever paid for it to the tapster.'

"'And who was your friend Charles?' said my grandsire; 'he seems to have been a jolly sort of fellow.'

"'Why, tawny Charles Stewart the king, to be sure—a much pleasanter companion, I can tell you, than sly Noll the Protector.'

"My grandfather nearly dropt the bottle of good Hock from his hand, when he heard he was sitting with a boon companion of the merry monarch.

"'You look astonished,' continued the other, 'but I could tell you more wonderful things than that. Few people give me credit for so much experience as I have, but I was quite a young fellow then, not much above threescore.'

"'Do you mean to say,' exclaimed my grandfather, 'that you were sixty years of age in the time of Charles the Second?'

"The old man nodded.

"'Then, in the name of Heaven, how old are you now?'

"'Pretty nearly your own age, Master Wellwood,—younger, perhaps, if we consider our lifetime from the space between us and the grave, and not between us and the cradle.'

"'You mean that you have a chance of living longer than I have?'

"'A chance? A certainty. I have but entered on my first youth yet; and you, too, I am informed, will be blest with length of days.'

"'Your informant was particularly obliging. His means of knowing how long I am to live were of course undeniable?'

"'Of course. It is impossible for me to be deceived. The stars themselves have told me.'

"My grandfather entered with all the eagerness of his age into the rhapsodies of the enthusiast. He half believed in the agency of stars and conjunctions of planets, and was quite bewildered by the strange assertions of his new acquaintance. However, he did not trouble his head much about whether his statements of his extreme longevity were true or not. He found him, at all events, an exceedingly agreeable companion. Age, whatever it might have done for his eyesight, had only sharpened his appetite, and strengthened his head. The Palatinate had evidently no more effect than water upon a brain accustomed to it in the banished court at Breda, and even stout punch was entirely thrown away upon so seasoned a vessel. My grandfather, in the mean time, possessing no such preservative against the effects of his libations, after speechifying incessantly for a full hour, revealing every item of his birth, parentage, and education, was at length conveyed to his couch in a state of the most profound oblivion of nearly every thing that had passed.

"Next morning he was greatly disappointed on finding that his companion of the night before had set off on his journey long before he was up. He breakfasted in sober sadness, paid his reckoning, and, mounting Brown Hamlet, pursued his way to Oxford. After resting a short time in that 'famous university,' he proceeded at a slow pace towards Henley, with the intention of resting there for the night. When he had left Oxford four or five miles behind him, he thought he perceived the old astrologer a short way in advance, urging his shambling grey pony into a trot, an exercise to which the wearied animal seemed to have a very decided objection. A few minutes served to overtake him, and my grandfather was rejoiced to discover he had not been mistaken.

"'I am glad, Master Wellwood, you have overtaken me, for this poor little pony will go all the better for your company.'

"'And yourself none the worse, Master Hasdrubal—for I think that was the name you told me—though, by Jupiter, my memory is not so clear this morning as it ought to be.'

"'My name is indeed Paulo Hasdrubal, as you so correctly remember; and I shall be delighted not only with your

company, but, in this disturbed road, with your protection also.'

"'Fear nothing, old Hasdrubal; I have two friends in my holster shall give good account of any one who molests us. Your pony does not seem to carry his years so well as you do yours. He won't go much farther to-night.'

"'I hope to get him on at any rate to Henley,' replied the old man, 'where, indeed, I have a little business; but if you are not in a hurry, Master Wellwood, and will give him a little breathing time, there is a pretty little copse about half a mile on, where we can retire, and pass half-an-hour over the contents of my little basket.'

"'Agreed with all my heart,' said the other; 'and you shall amuse the time with an account of some others of your strange adventures.'

"'Come on then,' said the astrologer; and by dint of extra flogging, and the example of Brown Hamlet, the pony quickened its pace, and in a few minutes they diverged from the high-road, and found themselves in a thickly-leaved coppice, about three hundred yards to the right. The old man took off his saddle, unbridled the worn-out pony, and let him pick up the grass at his ease. My grandfather merely fastened his horse to a tree, and sitting down beside the old man, did ample justice to the luncheon contained in his basket.

"'Well, father,' he said, 'your teeth seem pretty good, considering what capital use you have made of them for an age or two.'

"'Yes, thanks to the planet Saturn, under which I was born, who ate lumps of stone when he was much older than I am, and swallowed them as if they had been slices of butter. My nerves are as good as ever, my aim as sure, my hand as steady, and, in the day time, even my eyes as good. See.'

"As he said this, he took a pistol from the holster of his saddle, lying beside him, and, tossing an empty bottle into the air, shattered it into a thousand pieces with the ball.

"'Well done,' exclaimed my grandfather; 'you are a first-rate marksman, Master Hasdrubal. Let me try.'

"'Willingly, my son; but empty the bottle before you

throw it away. There is still a mouthful in it. Here is my other pistol.'

" The bottle was thrown up, fired at, and missed.

" ' Confound the bottle,' said the young man.—' Let me have just another trial. I'll go for one of my own pistols.

" ' No,' replied the other, ' we may perhaps alarm some traveller on the road; let us rather pass the time as they do in Algiers.'

" ' How is that?'

" ' In telling tales. When I was there as a galley-slave, I became a great favourite with my master by my talent in setting him to sleep with my long-winded stories.'

" ' Were you long there?'

" ' Longer than I wished—but you shall hear. It was in the first James's time, towards the end of his reign'—here my grandfather started, but made no observation, setting the narrator down in his own mind either as the devil, or as some old doting enthusiast—' Yes, it was somewhere about a hundred and thirty years ago,' continued the old man, as if in answer to my grandfather's start of surprise, ' that I found myself one morning without any money in my pocket, and not any settled plan in my head, walking on the landing-place on the shore of Boulogne. A little vessel attracted my attention, bearing right in for the harbour; and with the undefined curiosity of men who have nothing else to think of, I waited its arrival, to see the passengers it contained. When it lay to, a small boat put off, and in it I perceived five men, besides the sailors, who rowed to land. The first who stepped on shore was a tall, handsome man, though rather meanly dressed; but there was a courtliness in the air with which h tendered his assistance to a thin young man, who next leaped upon the sand, which riveted my observation. The two who had disembarked walked hastily towards the town, while the three other individuals remained for the purpose apparently of making arrangements with the boatmen. The strangers directed their steps to the place where I was standing; and as they passed, I could not avoid—in spite of the vulgarity of their clothing, and their evident desire to avoid observation—lifting my hat from my head, and paying them the low-

liest obeisance. The taller of the strangers stopped as soon as he saw me, and said to his companion, 'I say, Jack Smith, this won't do. Here we are discovered the moment we put foot on foreign ground. What fools to part with our long beards at Dover!'

"'Beards, my lord duke,' said I, with my bonnet still in hand, 'beards would be ineffectual to conceal from the eyes of a true Englishman the princely features of one beside you who claims every Englishman's obedience.'

"'Bribe him, Steenie, or hire him to accompany us,' said the other stranger, with a stutter which did not altogether conceal the dignity of his manner while he spoke.

"'My Lord of Buckingham,' I said, 'and you, whom seeing in such unusual guise I dare hardly name, I shall neither be bribed nor hired. If my services can be of use, command them—if not pass on; there is a seal upon my lips which shall never be broken.'

"'A right good fellow, and one to be trusted, I warrant, replied the duke. 'Follow us, good fellow—but keep your bonnet on your head; jerkins like ours deserve no such observances.'

"I followed the gentlemen, and in an hour found myself the trusted companion of Prince Charles and Buckingham, who had left England the day before to prosecute their journey to the Court of Spain. Dick Graham, my fellow-servant on the expedition, was of incalculable use. I used to think myself a person of a very decent degree of impudence before; but I found myself the most modest of mankind compared to Dicky Graham. In several places our masters were recognised—their faces and stations were too eminent to remain long unknown. Dick Graham exhausted all the Biblical knowledge he had acquired in three years' study at the university, in calling down curses on himself and others, if the gentlemen he followed were not Master John and Master Thomas Smith, two worthy young squires from the county of Suffolk. If any one appeared a little tardy of belief, Dick only pointed to his sword, and as his reputation as a master of the rapier was pretty well established, his statement deri-

ved considerable authenticity from the vigour with which he seemed determined to enforce it. I will not tire you with all the adventures of our journey, which doubtless, as you are a well read young gentleman, you are well acquainted with already; but you are to imagine us safely arrived at Madrid,—canons firing, drums beating, bells ringing, and the haughty King of Spain sitting humbly, in all our processions, at the left hand of the Prince of Wales. After a while the negotiations seemed not to get on quite so favourably as at first. Buckingham and Olivarez hated each other with a fervour of detestation which only rival courtiers can entertain. But my situation about the prince's person became no sinecure, in consequence of these bickerings of the favourites. Buckingham had occasion for a trusty messenger to convey some useful information to the Duke de Medina Sidonia, and did me the honour to make me the bearer of it to that nobleman at his summer palace on the banks of the Guad-Alquibir. Such a palace was not to be found in all Spain; for my own part I preferred it to the newly built Escurial. After having delivered my despatches, I went forth to make a survey of the surrounding country. And here, for the first time, and the last, I knew what it was to be in love. All this passed so many years ago, Master Wellwood, that you would perhaps have little interest in my description of bright eyes, red lips, and glossy hair, which have now for the better part of a century been defiled in the dust of death—better, far better than to be hidden and dimmed and buried in the living sepulchre of a joyless old age. We met often—we loved; and even now I recollect the agony of our hearts when the period of my return approached. One more meeting, unobstructed by the inquisitive eyes of the palace, we resolved to have. A bower, well known to both of us, was the place fixed on,—half way between the magnificent river and the village of Saint Lucar de Barremeda. We met just at the Spaniards' witching hour of night, when the planet consecrated to love rose clearly over the grove of olive-trees in which our bower was placed; but not long had we been engaged in mutual professions of attachment, when a band of armed men rushed into the place,

and, holding glittering scimitars to our hearts, ordered us to follow them in silence.

"'Lost! lost!' exclaimed the lady—'My brother has discovered us, and there is no prospect of any thing but death.'

"'Your highness,' I whispered in reply, 'gives way too readily to despair.'

"'Hush, hush, my friend—I am no princess now, for I fear we are fallen into far more evil hands than even those of an enraged brother.'

"'How? what fear you?'

"'The pirates. See, we are going towards the bay; and yonder, a little way from the point, rides a felucca, which no doubt will carry us to Algiers. Give them no clue to who or what I am; call me nought but Mariana—your sister—wife—any thing to conceal from them who I really am!'

"I must hurry over the remaining scenes, Master Wellwood, as it now draws near our time to jog on towards Henley. We were indeed conducted to Algiers—separated—though with a promise, if ransom came proportioned to our apparent consequence, we should be restored to each other in all safety and honour. But where was I to apply for a ransom? Buckingham and the prince I knew too well to trouble on the subject, as their rage at being disappointed in the object of my mission would blot out all the tenderness they ever entertained for me, and all regret at my loss. My companion had no friend from whom she could hope any thing. Were she even to be restored to her family, she well knew that her state would be one of greater slavery than even among the barbarians. Months passed away, and as there was no appearance of a ransom, our condition, or at least mine, for of Mariana's I was ignorant, became a good deal more rigorous and unpleasant. At last it degenerated into actual slavery, but from this I was saved by the kind offices of an old man, one Malek, a prophet and astronomer, to whom I had been useful on my first arrival in the city. He took me into his own service; he taught me the secrets of his stupendous and profound philosophy, which only fools and idiots pretend to despise. He opened to me the book of fate, and the future is at this moment clearer to me than the

past. At last he said, 'My friend, I know you long to be reunited to your lady, and it is in my power to aid you. On the next great festival, the Dey has a public display of skill in all the military exercises. You, I know, are a very good horseman, and I will furnish you with bullets for your pistols, with which it is impossible to miss. A horse also shall meet you on that day. Ask no questions, but when you see the animal, whisper in its ear, "Malek mi granda jehuri"—spring into the saddle, and you shall have nothing left to wish for.' The appointed day came, and, old as I am, Master Wellwood, if you will allow me, I will show the manner in which I became possessed of the noblest Arabian that ever dashed up the dust of the desert in its speed.'

"The old man rose as he spoke—walked quietly up to my grandfather's horse, Brown Hamlet—untied his bridle from the tree, and, whispering something in his ear, sprang lightly as a youth of twenty into the saddle. 'Now, Master Wellwood,' he said, 'I see you are interested in the continuation of my story; but I have no time to tell it you just now—my pistols you will find both unloaded—my pony is very slow to be sure, but very useful: and as to my face and figure, they are pretty good, I think, for an old man that recollects all about James the First and Charles the Second, and only rewards himself for his anecdote with the charger of a Gloucestershire bumpkin.' In a moment the shrivelled skin was pulled from his face, the flaxen wig thrown off, and the horseman's cloak cast aside, displaying a very handsome young man about five-and-twenty years of age, dressed in the extremest style of the fashion of that day.

"'Fool, idiot, ass, to have listened so long and earnestly to a confounded swindler in the disguise of a philosopher!' exclaimed my grandfather, grasping in vain one of the pistols which he himself had discharged at the empty bottle.

"'Your horse, Master Wellwood,' continued the other, keeping adroitly out of reach, 'is fairly mine; I have whispered "Malek mi granda jehuri" in his ear; and so farewell, and a pleasant journey to you to Chatham.'

"Saying this, he galloped off with a loud laugh, leaving the young soldier in no very enviable situation. However,

resolving to make the best of his bargain, he saddled the old pony, and followed as quickly as he could. Brown Hamlet was out of sight, and it was absurd to think of trying to overtake him. He contented himself, therefore, with trotting on quietly towards Henley, resolving to raise the hue and cry the moment he reached the town. In passing through a little village, he asked if a person had been seen answering the description of his recent acquaintance, but the man he addressed, instead of replying to his question, laid his hand on his bridle and said, 'Where the devil, young man, didst thee get this here pony?'

"'I found it,' replied the rider.

"'Thee found it? I know thee did, and it was just on the same day that old farmer Hutchins found a broken head —you robbed the old man and stole his pony.'

"'Leave go the bridle, you scoundrel, or I'll blow your brains out,' said my grandfather, losing patience, and seizing one of his pistols. The man, in great alarm, gave the pony its head, and the pistol kept the crowd which had quickly gathered round him at a respectful distance. My grandfather pursued his way for about three quarters of a mile, closely followed by the most active of the villagers, who, in truth, found no great difficulty in keeping up with the most rapid speed of his miserable steed. At last, at a narrow lane which led up to a cottage, a few yards from the road, the pony first of all made a dead stop, and then in dogged defiance of whip, spur, and bridle, stumbled up the narrow path at a shambling sort of trot, and stood patiently at the first door he came to. The pursuers in the mean time blockaded the lane, and an old man issuing from the cottage, recognised the pony in a moment. 'Ah! Bessy,' he cried, 'I are so glad to see thee—and thee, thou be'st the murderin' villain as sprang on me from the hedge, and stole poor owld Bessy away from me. I'll pay thee now, I warrant, for the patch I wore on my head a full month after I met thee. Off with thee—off and be hanged!' My grandfather endeavoured to make the pony move, but all in vain. It stood stock-still at its ancient home, and in a few minutes the young man was dismounted, and secured by the united efforts of a score of

men and women; the latter of whom began to pity his unhappy situation very much, when they saw how young and unlike a murderer he was. Well, of course there was no great difficulty in establishing his innocence, but still even to do this occupied more than a week, and he found he was ten days behind his appointed time, when he presented himself to his commanding officer at Chatham. That gentleman was busily poring over some important despatches when he sent in his name.

"'Well, Cornet Wellwood,' he said, without lifting his eyes from the paper, 'have you had a pleasant ride?'

"'Not very much so, colonel.'

"'No? what was the cause? didn't you find the ladies agreeable? Now, I think Miss Cecilia seemed very much disposed to make the excursion as delightful to you as she could. In fact, Wellwood, you are the luckiest fellow in life. You have not joined us more than a week. You are already the favourite of the regiment: the ladies are all in raptures with you; and, in short,—but who the devil are you?'

"'I? I am Cornet Wellwood. I am extremely sorry I have been prevented by the most untoward circumstances from joining the regiment till to-day.'

"'You? you Cornet Wellwood?—and who the deuce is the jolly fellow we have had here delighting us all the last ten days? I myself have lent him a hundred guineas till his remittances come up from Gloucester;—before he arrived, he wrote to his servant, who had come up here with his luggage, to leave it, and go on particular business into Yorkshire immediately. He has just accompanied Sir Charles —— and his daughters on a horse of Major Mowbray's—but he will be back in half-an-hour, and then the mystery will be cleared up.' The mystery was very soon cleared up, but not much to my grandfather's satisfaction—his representative in the regiment never made his appearance, nor did Major Mowbray's horse, or the colonel's hundred guineas, ever find their way again to the proper owners. A letter was left for my grandfather in his room, informing him, that, by sending fifty guineas to a certain inn in London, and asking no questions, Brown Hamlet would be restored. 'And now, young gen-

tleman,' it proceeded, 'never believe in any stranger's honesty who begins telling you long rigmarole stories about himself. Never lay yourself open by too much of communicativeness till you know your man. Accept this advice as a slight return for the pleasure I have experienced while honoured by your name, and do not think too harshly of The Highwayman, Duval.'

"My grandfather took Duval's advice, and bore him no ill-will for the tricks he had played him. I have heard him say, that he had made so favourable an impression on the officers during his short residence with them, that even the colonel was very sorry for his fate, when he heard a few years after that he was hanged."

CHAPTER V.

All night I dreamt of nothing but cool rivers flowing through shady woods, prodigious icebergs, fresh imported from the North Pole, and I awakened, wishing that my gullet was the centre arch of Blackfriars' bridge. Oh, the horrors of the parched lips and burning tongue, which salute a gentleman of retired habits, like myself, on the morning after partaking of a few noggins with delicate and susceptible friends—such as my companions of the Mess. Hunger is a very endurable feeling—indeed, on some occasions, I rather like it—when invited, for instance, to dine with the late Sir Billy. The agony of appetite began, perhaps, about three, so that I had four mortal hours of sufferance—cheered, no doubt, by the anticipation of a feast, such as the gods, poor devils, never dreamt of. Luncheon would have been high-treason against the majesty of dinner—and so I went on—hungry and expectant—suffering and delighted. How different this calm placidity from the impatience produced by thirst! I should like to see the liquid, however celestially compounded, the prospect of which, at a distance of an hour,

would tempt me to refrain from soda-water the instant I can eject the cork from the bottle. Impossible! So just let me trouble you for another tumbler, with the smallest whisper of "the veritable" at the bottom of the glass. Old Hixie, or as he was commonly called, the quartermaster, from his amazing skill in securing the best billets to himself, to whom this request was addressed for the eighth time at least, did the needful in a twinkling, and over went the ineffable fluid, making me suddenly as fresh as a four-year old, and hungry as a hunter. It is useless enumerating the various articles, the aggregate of which constituted my breakfast. A stroll to the reading-room, a segar, and some Burton ale,—a lounge on the sofa, with a slight doze over a lively scene in a novel, brought me in safety to the dinner-hour. It is surely the force of habit which makes people appetized exactly at the nick of time. If a man, for many years, has accustomed himself to dine at seven, though his luncheon were to last till half-past six, I have no manner of doubt he would be gluttonous as ever at the first view of the tablecloth. On this day, we had fewer strangers amongst us than usual. Every thing went on like a family party. I observed only one or two new faces, and was greatly taken with the expression of the young man's countenance who sat next me. Old Hixie was on the other side of him, and showed, by the friendliness of his manner, how delighted he was to have secured so agreeable a listener. Of all the good-natured fellows I have ever met with in the whole course of my travels, old Hixie was five hundred times the best. It was impossible to put him out of temper; if you attended to him, he was delighted—if not, he seemed just as delighted as ever. His stories—he had only two—were as well known as himself; so it may easily be imagined how pleasing a stranger must have been, who not only had never heard his anecdotes, but was evidently well inclined to hear them. Hixie was now fat, red, and forty-seven. He could have furnished forth three of the finest characters in King Henry the Sixth. Bardolph would have gloried in his nose, Sir John in the rotundity of his paunch, and Pistol might have been proud of the liveliness of that peculiar faculty which they say is generally found most

powerfully developed in travellers. At the same time, old Hixie was as brave as Hotspur. But somehow or other, though he had only two stories, he made them go a great way by little additions or subtractions. He never told them twice with exactly the same conclusion; and our only wonder was, how a gentleman, with such a talent for improving and altering, never took a bolder step, and invented a new story altogether. He could have written myriads of novels, if any one would only have furnished him with a beginning; for, when once set afloat, it was delightful to see with what incidents he embellished the narrative as he proceeded. Furnish him with tools, he could wield them like a master; but without tools he could do nothing.

"Have you been long in York?" he asked the young gentleman who sat between us.

"I only arrived late last night. I was detained on the road by a sort of adventure."

"How—how—I'm so fond of adventures,—What was it?"

"Why, as I was sitting quietly smoking my segar behind the coachman, a lady inside stopt the coach, and begged that some gentleman would exchange places for a stage or two with a young female who felt very unwell. An old fellow beside me immediately volunteered. I got down, effected the change in a jiffey, extinguished my segar, and addressed myself to the invalid at my side. Her face was so muffled up that I could not catch the smallest glimpse of her features, and her figure was equally obscured by a prodigious tartan cloak. She only answered yes or no to my observations; and at last, concluding she felt too unwell to enter into conversation, I left her to herself, and amused myself by admiring the scenery. But there is something in travelling with any one which always makes one impatient to discover who they are. Don't you think so?"

"Think so?" said Hixie, "to be sure I do. I can never rest till I find out every thing about them."

"Well, I went on wondering who this female could be; and after about half an hour's silence, I addressed myself to her again,—'Are you going far?' I said.

"'Yes; a very long way,' she answered.

"I did not like to ask her her destination point-blank; besides, as I am myself engaged to be married the end of this month, my curiosity about young ladies is not so lively as it used to be.

"'I hope you won't suffer from the journey,' I said, 'for travelling must be very fatiguing to invalids.'

"Every time we stopped to change horses, enquiries were made by the lady inside how she supported the fatigue; and altogether, there was something about those two women, which, in spite of my engagement, made me anxious to find them out."

"Did you find them out?" said old Hixie,—"I'm confoundedly anxious myself—though I think I know who they were."

"Indeed?" replied the young man; "you must have a great knack at guessing. Well, they left the coach at some town or other on this side of Manchester, and as I thought this would be a famous opportunity to discover them, I offered them my escort while the passengers stopped to dinner. The muffled lady clung very closely to my arm while I superintended the unloading of their luggage, and at last, on a card which was nailed upon one of their trunks"——

"You saw the name," said Hixie; "and it was your sweetheart. My heavens! you cried—Maria, or Julia, or whatever her name is, who the devil expected to find you here? Ah! dearest love, she replied, how could I stay away from you? I knew you were coming to York, and I thought Gretna Green just a step beyond, so I persuaded this old lady to travel along with me till we overtook you—and now to find you here, Oh, heavens!"

It is uncertain how long old Hixie would have gone on giving his version of the story, but the young man looked quite steadily all the time, and interrupted him—"No, sir. I found it was a Mrs and Miss Smith on their way to Scarborough. The young lady was about forty years of age, and afflicted with erysipelas in the cheek. I know nothing more about them, except that my politeness cost me my place, for the coach had started before I returned from seeing them to their lodgings."

"And is that all? Is that the adventure? My eyes! what a much better one I could have made of it!"

"But it is truth."

"Pooh, pooh! what the devil does that signify? No man is on his oath after dinner, and if a little colouring is required, who the deuce is to stand on such a trifle as that?"

But a good listener was by no means to be thrown away, though he proved to be an indifferent story-teller; so old Hixie, after flooring about a bottle in an incredibly short space of time, commenced his attack upon the stranger. It was very evident the young man entered fully into the narrator's peculiarity, and enjoyed the fun very much. But I am afraid it is impossible to convey any idea of Hixie's manner upon paper. In the first place, one misses the lustrous rubicundity of his countenance, and the contrast, ineffably ludicrous, furnished by the lugubriousness of his stories, for both of them were intended to be pathetic, and the inextinguishable hilarity of his face. If you can imagine either Keeley performing Lear, or Jack Reeve murdering Desdemona (and Othello,) you will have some little idea of old Hixie enacting the romantic, and occasionally overcome by his feelings.

"Take a good pull at the bottle," he began, "for my story is so confoundedly dismal, it always makes me as thirsty as a sand-bank. Grief, they say, is dry. I am sure I find it so. It is now nine-and-twenty years since I entered his Majesty's service, though nobody, to look at me, could suppose I was much older than that altogether. Well, I was fond of the army; and whenever a man is fond of any thing, he is sure to excel in it."

"I back old Hixie for a rump and dozen to drink three bottles of port, and six tumblers of brandy and water, without being a bit tipsy," cried a young lieutenant near the bottom of the table.

"Impossible!" said the other; "no man can drink such a lot as that, and walk straight to bed after it."

"Well, will you say done? Old Hixie will delight in the match; for, don't you recollect, in one of his stories, he always says that people delight in what they excel in?"

The bet was made; and the narrator, taking no notice of this unfortunate interruption, proceeded with his story.

"I soon made myself as much master of my profession as I am at this moment. I taught myself that a soldier's duty is paramount to every other consideration; that home, country, friends, ay, love itself, must give way to the stern claims of duty. Duty is to a sold"——

"Hixie, my dear fellow, leave out the rest of your homily on duty, for we know it pretty well by heart," said the same young lieutenant, who was now attending to the quartermaster's harangue.

"Hush, Saville!" said Hixie; "I'm only giving a little private anecdote to my young friend here, and I bar all interruptions."

Saville let him have his own way; but the word was passed round that Hixie had got hold of a listener, and every eye was turned to the animated countenance of that most eloquent and highly-flattered gentleman.

"A young man," he continued, "about the same age as myself, entered the army the very day I did, and was appointed my regimental servant. His name was John Taylor—upon my soul, the handsomest fellow I ever saw in my life. He was rather taller than I was, being six feet high without his shoes, dark brown curling hair, and deep expressive eyes—in fact, he was the best looking youngster in our regiment, and we were certainly a splendid body of men. John Taylor, as I have said, was rather taller than I was, and not quite so stout; but"——

"In fact," interrupted Saville, "he was twice your height, and half your thickness; so that you might have been rolled out into just such another."

"Exactly," replied Hixie; "but you promised to be quiet. "Well, this young man struck me, from the very first, to be something different from what his situation might have led one to suppose. His manners, too, were of a most superior order; and altogether there was something about him which made me feel it very difficult to order him—to clean my boots. To all my questions of where he came from, and what had induced him to enter the army, he gave evasive re-

plies, and seemed little inclined to enter into any conversation on such subjects. At last, however, he appeared a little more communicative. He told me he came from a village in Kent, with which I happened to be acquainted; that love, which is the cause of all our joys, all our sorrows," (here Hixie heaved a deep sigh), "was the cause of all his misfortunes. He told me no particulars; but I confess I was interested by the little he had confided to me. And though our ranks were so different, and our relative positions in the service kept us so far apart, by heavens! I exclaimed to myself one morning as he brought me a pot of beer, and poured it out for me with the air of an emperor—by heavens! I should like very much to help this unfortunate lover, or at least to know every thing about him. Gentlemen, you may perhaps think it was below the dignity of a superior officer, when I confess to you that I pumped him; but consider I was then only an ensign of foot, and confoundedly anxious to discover the mystery of his love.

"'Taylor,' said I, 'I am acquainted with the little village of Hawley, from which you come.'

"He started as I spoke.

"'Are you, sir?' said he; it is a most romantic spot.'

"'Do you mean romantic from the beauty of its situation, or from any adventures you have met with there?'

"He stammered a little as he answered me,—'Beauty, sir? situation, sir? Oh, yes—very romantic.'

"He sighed as he concluded, and hurried off with my linen to the washerwoman. By Jupiter, thought I, this is very extraordinary; a common soldier talking of romance and beauty—there is more in this man than is dreamt of in the philosophy of the ranks. I'll inquire into it. My curiosity, however, remained for a long time ungratified. We were now in all the hurry of preparation for foreign service, for we had received orders to hold ourselves in readiness for embarkation. I made sure, in the course of the voyage, of picking up the particulars of his history; but what was my surprise and disappointment to find, that about three weeks previous to the time fixed for the sailing of the expedition, John Taylor had disappeared! A deserter—could he be a

thief? I counted my shirts and stockings that instant, and found every thing correct. I found also a letter addressed to me, stating, that my kindness during the time he had been in the service prompted him to inform me of his resolution to leave the army, and also to give me to understand that the circumstances which had led him to enter the service no longer existed, and that he had every chance of being happy in his love! This letter only added fuel to fire; and how the deuce was I to act? Here was a deserter had made me the confidant of his desertion. Heavens! imagine me shot for aiding and abetting a crime against which my sense of duty made my inmost soul revolt! But how to proceed was the difficulty. If I showed the letter at all, or acted upon it, would it not appear immediately that I knew all about his design, about the causes of his enlistment, and about the issue of his love? Heavens! I never was in such a quandary —and not to be acquainted with the secret after all! He was advertised and described in hand-bills, rewards offered for his apprehension, men sent out in search of him in all directions, but no tidings did we hear of John Taylor. Our colonel, who was a prodigious martinet, and very proud of the appearance of his men, was very much distressed by the loss of the flower of the regiment; and he vowed that if he were discovered at any time, no matter how distant, he should be shot as a warning to others. Well, our preparations for embarkation still continued; I got another servant, but he was such a cursed little ugly fellow, that I never troubled myself to imagine whether he had ever been in love or not. In about a fortnight after the desertion, we were marched to the coast, and after a week's practising and delay till the expedition was concentrated, we at last set sail, and with a fair wind and fine weather, landed on the loveliest shores in the world—the coast of Portugal. Well, we dodged about from one place to another—Sir Hew gave us very little rest —and at last our regiment found itself stationed at a small village a few miles from the memorable town of Cintra.

"My eyes! what a beautiful country! hills and valleys, all steeped in continual sunshine—and excellent port-wine about ninepence a-bottle! We received our billets, and I

went with mine to the house of a Signor Joachim Fernando Pereira, and a beautiful snug house it was. The signor himself, they told me, was from home, but I was received by the loveliest woman I ever beheld—dressed like an angel, and with such enchanting smiles! I never felt so inclined to be ravenously in love. But no! there was something about the Lady Seraphina that made me thrill with awe, as well as kindle with admiration. Oh, what a delicious thing it is to sit beside a surpassingly beautiful woman, and gaze on her charming features, even though you don't exactly comprehend her language—and I must say the Lady Seraphina was the best mixer of brandy and water, and also the best judge of a true Havannah, I have ever met with. I had staid in the house rather more than a week without ever seeing Signor Joachim, when at last I was told that he was expected that evening, and if I could get quit of my brother officers, he would be delighted to see me in his private room. This was told to me by the Lady Seraphina in her broken language—but, by Jupiter, a lovely woman has very little use for a tongue! The eyes do every thing, and have far more effect than a sermon. About seven that evening, I was ushered by the lady herself through several rooms, and at last conducted to a chamber at a remote end of the house. The door was opened, and I saw only one gentleman sitting at a table, which was covered with every delicacy you can imagine, and a huge case of spirits stuffed to the very brim. I made my bow, and when I had recovered my upright position, I gazed with speechless astonishment on the countenance of my entertainer. There never were two peas in a pod more like than Signor Joachim Fernando Pereira, and my late servant, John Taylor, the deserter. He spoke none of your cursed soft-sounding Portuguese, but the purest English, and with the finest pronunciation, just as I do myself.

"The moment I heard his voice, oh the dickens, said I, here's a pretty mess! This fellow is resolved to be the death of me, first by raising my curiosity, and next by martial law, for concealing a deserter. 'Taylor,' I said, 'here's a devil of a go.'

"'Sit down, my dear Mr Hixie,' he replied—'Seraphina,

my love, hand a chair to Captain Hixie, and thank him for his kindness to your husband.'

"I only looked for a moment in her face—my eyes! such a face and such a smile!—I took the chair, and endeavoured to steel my heart to the due performance of my duty.

"'Seraphina, my angel, make the captain a glass of brandy and water, and hand him a segar.'

"I sat all this time quite mute. What, drink and smoke with a deserter! Impossible—I declare I was so petrified, that I found it impracticable to refuse in words—but I shook my head in token of refusal. In the mean time, the lady made me the tipple, and presented me with a segar—such a hand!—so white, so beautiful, such taper fingers, and so covered with rings—and besides, *she* had never been a deserter. I sighed from the bottom of my heart, and lighted the Havannah.

"Pereira then began. 'You must hear my story, Mr Hixie, before you judge too harshly of my conduct.'

"'Say on, sir,' said I, working myself into a fearful regard for duty.

"'I told you, you recollect, at Winchester, that the circumstances which had led me into the army were at an end, and that I had every prospect of happiness in my wooing. My father was a wine-merchant in very extensive business, and sent me to his correspondent here to superintend his interests on this side of the water. I did so for several years, and when I tell you that Seraphina was the daughter and only child of the merchant at whose house I lived, I need not inform you, that my time passed, as the poet says, on angel wings. Her father, the Signor Pereira, was rich and proud. I, however, was a great favourite with him, and as my father had been of considerable service to him in the way of trade, I perceived, that could I gain the daughter's affections, I had nothing to fear on the score of his withholding his consent. In this I was not disappointed. Seraphina confessed that she had loved me long—Seraphina, my love, make the captain another glass—and on applying to the father for his approbation, he told us, he could refuse nothing to the son of his English friend. Buoyed up with flattering

hopes, I went over to England on the earliest opportunity, presented myself to my father, but found him not only opposed to the match, but raving against it with such a ferocity of resentment, that I saw at once it would be impossible to overcome his scruples. I lost no time, however; the effort pained me in writing this dreadful news to Pereira—but praying him at the same time to allow us to continue our engagement, in hopes of overcoming the objections of my father. The answer was a death-blow to my hopes—that Seraphina should never be allowed to enter any family which was not proud of such an acquisition—Seraphina, my angel, give the captain a fresh segar; and in short, vowing, in terms scarcely less energetic than those of my own father, that nothing should ever reconcile him to the connexion. I had a friend at Hawley, in Kent, who was the only one to whom I confided the difficulties of my position. He told me, that he knew one plan by which I might make a last effort to work on the tenderness of my father. He advised me to prove to him the sincerity and constancy of the passion which consumed me by entering the army as a private, and writing to apprize him of my situation. My friend assured me, from his knowledge of my father, that such a step was almost certain to lead him to relent, and that having once convinced him of my firmness, every thing else would follow as we could wish. Persuaded by my friend, I consented to give his advice a trial. I enlisted in the army—Seraphina, my life, another tumbler for the captain—I found my situation intolerable, cheered only by the condescending kindness of a very distinguished officer in the regiment—make it strong, my angel—to whom, I am sure, my gratitude will never suffer decrease.'

"He bowed as he spoke, but I smoked on, determined to take no notice, but to do my duty, and deliver him up to justice.

"'I wrote to acquaint my father with what I had done, and again to implore him to give his consent, and make two lovers happy. Back came an answer, still more furious than his former declaration, informing me, that he had promised that I should marry the daughter of his English partner.—

that finding me incorrigibly obstinate and degraded, by reducing myself to the rank of a common soldier, he had cut me out of his will, washed his hands of me for ever, and hoped I might be flogged as early and as severely as the service would permit.'

"'Very sensible man,' I said, 'he knows something about military law.'

"'This, you will allow, captain,' he continued, not minding my observation, 'was a hard letter to receive from a father. I wrote to my friend at Hawley, imploring him to write to Signor Pereira, informing him, that though my father was obstinate, it was through no disrespect to him or his family, but solely from a previous engagement into which he had entered without consulting my inclinations; but that I continued fondly devoted to Seraphina, and though no longer rich, or fit in any way to be a match for so much loveliness and virtue, that I hoped to be permitted to devote my life and my knowledge of business to his service. A month brought me an answer—such an answer! Mr Hixie, you are a man of sentiment, a man of feeling; you will judge of the contending emotions in my bosom, when my friend forwarded to me a letter from Seraphina herself. It told me that her health had failed ever since I had left them —that her father did nothing but weep—that the house, which had once been alive to nothing but mirth and music, was nothing now but the dark abode of a despairing maid and a miserable old man.'

"A tear was in his eye as he spoke, and curse me if I could prevent a little quivering of the upper lip. I pretended to have burnt it with the segar, and that loveliest of women had another in my cheek in a moment. After a short pause, during which Seraphina compounded a tumbler for each of us, he proceeded—

"'The letter then went on to say that her father's pride had yielded at last, and that as his physicians informed him he had but a short time to live, he was anxious to see me as early as possible, and to give me his daughter and his blessing before he died. I had no time to wait and negotiate about the purchase of my release; in fact, I had no money

and no friend in England to whom I could apply. I resolved to send the requisite funds as soon as I should reach Pereira, and stealing quietly out of the camp, I made my way directly to the sea, and in a fortnight was in this place, and the happiest of men. Here I have been for a year, never yet having had time or a proper channel for transmitting the money for my discharge, but now happy to have in my house a gentleman whose previous kindness, under very different circumstances, leads me to hope he will not refuse his assistance upon this occasion. My father-in-law died shortly after my marriage, and as my father continued obstinately to cast me off, he begged me, on taking possession of his fortune, also to adopt his name. This I have done, and I now wait your determination whether you will aid me in obtaining a discharge, on payment of whatever sum may be demanded.'

"I paused before I made any reply; and Seraphina laid her hand imploringly on my arm.

"'Amigo nuostro,' she said, and looked so beseechingly in my face,—d—me I could not stand it, and finished my tumbler at a draught.

"'It is now too late,' I said. 'If the colonel sees you—he is a confounded hard-hearted, unromantic Scotchman—I'm hanged if he doesn't have you shot at the drum-head as soon as winking.'

"'Oh Dios!' sighed Seraphina, and leant her head on my shoulder—such a beautiful white neck, and ear-rings as large as an epaulet! What the devil was I to do? If old Crawford got hold of him, he was gone to a certainty. Duty commanded me to have him up without loss of time—Pity told me to sit still, and say nothing about it. Seraphina kept constantly whispering in my ear, in her own delicious language, though what it was she said I have no means of finding out, and what was to be done I did not know. But what! am I to allow compassion to drown the call of duty? No!"—

Here little Hixie became so animated, partly by the interest of his story, partly by the extent of his potations, that his fat red face became far redder and fatter, and he absolutely panted for breath like a grampus.

"Here, my lads," he continued, "was a beautiful woman

fleeching and beseeching,—there, an unfortunate man, with the finest case of spirits I had ever met,—but what were these to one who was devotedly attached to duty? What was I to do?"

"Why," said Saville, "last time you told the story, you had him shot for desertion, after a drum-head court-martial, —the time before, you let him off for a flogging,—for God's sake, spare him altogether to-night."

"What! spare a deserter altogether? I'll see him hanged first—it would have a very bad effect. No; I yielded so far to their entreaties, that, in fact, I—I—I undertook, you'll perceive, to manage the matter for them, on condition of their forfeiting one pipe of port and one hogshead of Madeira to the use of his Majesty's service. It was given in all due form to our mess, and when I gave them a discharge in proper style for the private John Taylor, you never saw two people so overjoyed in your life. Those Portuguese, you'll understand, kiss upon the most trifling occasions; but, my heavens! I don't believe any lady ever had such magnificent lips as the Lady Seraphina."

The little man threw himself back in his chair, and seemed to glow with the recollection of these imaginary kisses. For imaginary indeed they were. The gentleman, who had listened throughout the story very attentively, was just about to make a reply, when he was addressed from the bottom of the table by a gentleman in plain clothes, who spoke with a very Scottish accent.

"Sir, I've been listenin' a' night to the story o' the quartermaster. I was in the regiment wi' him at the time, and can bear witness to his anecdote, for I mind it very weel. There certainly was a lad o' the name o' John Taylor listed wi' us at Winchester; he was a lang thin good-for-nothing like fellow, wi' sic a grewsome cast in his een, that we all wondered at Hixie's takin' him for his servant. Weel, in a wee while after, he was detected drunk twa or three times, and auld Crawford threatened him sae strongly, that the n'er-do-weel deserted, and carried aff wi' him a' the handkerchiefs and half the snuff-boxes in the regiment. He didna trouble Hixie's wardrobe, for he carried most of it on his

back,—but I mind very weel we catched the scoundrel when we were in Portugal, playing aff his tricks under a foreign name, and passin' aff a disreputable Portuguese jaud for his wife; but, my certie, auld Crawford cared naething for his foreign name nor his huzzie, but just had him identified; and I mind perfectly, he consulted some o' us whether he should shoot him as a deserter, or only flog him as a thief. He was flogged in due course, an' a terrible skirlin' the crature made. So you see this is either the same story, or one very much like it."

Old Hixie opened his eyes when he heard this new version; and after trying for some time to look offended, found the attempt vain, and burst into a laugh. "Well, gentlemen," he said, "all I have to say is, which of these stories do you like best?"

CHAPTER VI.

It was unanimously agreed that old Hixie's ornaments were of essential service to his story, as people don't like to have their sympathies excited by a fellow with the marks of the cat-o'-nine tails on his back. One story, as is always the case, led to another, and I am sorry I can't recollect half the good anecdotes that were told that night. Wine seems to sharpen the imagination, and blunt the memory; but memory, as the veracious quartermaster says, is a most contemptible faculty, and unworthy of a man of originality or genius. The young stranger, to whom that worthy gentleman had addressed his conversation, related an incident that occurred to a friend of his, which, as Matthew says, "made a great sensation at the time."

"You are acquainted, perhaps," he said, "with Bryan Jones of the —th?"

"Bryan Jones!" replied the quartermaster; "to be sure

I am—a very nice little fellow, though rather too much of a lady's-man for my taste."

"A little effeminate, or so—but a good-natured, generous fellow at bottom, and as bold as if he were as big as an elephant. I was living a few years ago with him in the neighbourhood of Chester, and, as usual, was made the confidant of all his love passages and declarations, of which there might be, on the average, about three a-week. On this occasion he was more steady than usual, and was occupied entirely with one tender passion for at least ten days. The object of it he had never seen; but he knew that she was closely mewed up by her brother, an old gentleman, who had a villa about two miles from the city. This information, limited as it was, was enough to set the susceptible Bryan on fire. He heard afterwards that the lady was rich; and it was strongly suspected that the brother immured her so closely, to prevent any one depriving him of his sister's fortune; and it was also darkly insinuated that, to cloak his infamous purpose, he gave out that she was hopelessly deranged. 'The infernal, selfish, unnatural scoundrel,' said Bryan, 'to close up youth, beauty, innocence, and twenty thousand pounds! I'll rescue the ill-fated lady, or perish in the attempt!' The first step to be taken was, if possible, to become acquainted with the brother. His name was Mr Stephen Jenks. We made out that at one time he had practised as a surgeon in some other part of the country, but, on his accession to a considerable fortune, he had retired to the beautiful neighbourhood of Chester; and now that he had assumed the gentleman, was very anxious to conceal that he had ever been engaged in compounding pills. The tastes, however, of his ancient calling still stuck to him in spite of his attempts to enact the country squire—his conversation smelt of the gallipot—and his love for natural history had converted his house into a museum. Stuffed birds hung round his walls instead of pictures—you hung your hat in the lobby on the dorsal extremity of an antediluvian bear, and his chimney-piece ornaments were composed of a long row of bottles, filled with the most horrid tadpoles and two-headed monsters it was possible to conceive. But his col-

lection was not restricted to the dead; he had a sort of menagerie of the living. Foxes, wolves, jackdaws, and all manner of birds and beasts, hooted, howled, screamed, and bellowed throughout the mansion. Squire Jenks might have left his doors quite open in the most lawless of times, as few housebreakers, I imagine, would run the risk of furnishing so many ravenous animals with a mouthful. All this, and a good deal more information of a similar sort, Mr Bryan picked up at the reading-room, frequented by Mr Jenks. But though all the other subscribers were garrulous in their descriptions of the gentleman and his establishment, not one of them pretended to be acquainted with either. The gentleman, indeed, they bowed to, and sometimes exchanged a word with, in the room; but the mansion, with all its monstrosities and curiosities, was to them a *terra incognita*. 'But his sister?' said Bryan Jones—'you're sure he has a sister? The detestable, inhuman villain, to keep a beautiful young creature like her in the very same den with wolves and foxes!' And Bryan was prodigiously in love, without even seeing the object of his passion.

"For two or three days the lover kept prowling in the neighbourhood of the villa. As evening came on, he advanced his approaches to the garden-wall, looked attentively at all the windows, and fixed upon one of them, as if by intuition, as the chamber-window of the unhappy prisoner. It was about half-past eight, in a beautiful night in August; he lifted some fine gravel, and threw it against the window-pane. It was immediately opened, and there appeared, in the dimness of the twilight, a very graceful figure, dressed all in white, with a countenance which Bryan declared to be beautiful, though he was forced to confess that he came to that conclusion in total ignorance of its features, the darkness being so considerable as to put it out of his power to make affidavit to the lady's possession of either nose or eyes.

"'I am come to rescue you, you adorable creature,' he exclaimed, 'from the infernal Noah's Ark they've put you into!'

"'You're very kind,' said the lady, in a voice that even Bryan's enthusiasm could not hinder him from thinking

rather cold than otherwise. 'This is not Noah's Ark—'tis Buffing Villar.'*

"'Buffing Villar!' replied Bryan. 'Never mind the name of it—it is a confounded place. Leave it, my dear Miss Jenks, and make me the happiest of men.'

"'Why should I leave it; and why will my leaving it make you the happiest of men?'

"'By being mine!—by allowing me to throw myself and fortune at your feet!'

"'Yourself!' replied the lady.—'Who are you? Your fortune, how much is it?'

"'Come,' thought the persevering Bryan, 'this looks like business.—As to myself, madam, I have the honour to be Bryan Jones, Esquire, holding a lieutenant's commission in his Majesty's —th regiment of foot, five-and-twenty years of age next fourteenth day of September, five feet seven inches and three quarters [with my boots on], and a certainty of a regiment [if I live long enough, and have money to buy my steps]. My fortune is not large at present, though quite enough [with the help of unlimited tick] to keep me with all the comforts of a gentleman; but my prospects are considerable. Indeed, I see no reason to despair of shortly coming into possession of twenty thousand pounds [she will never think of keeping it in her own possession].'

"The gentleman's description of himself seemed to have made a favourable impression, for the lady, after a short pause, said—

"'I think it would be delightful. Do you look well in a red coat?'

"'Why, if you insist on an answer to so perplexing a question,' replied Bryan, 'I should say that, considering I am not so tall as Major Flannigan, who is six feet four, nor so heavy as our colonel, who broke his charger's back, I am as good-looking as any officer on parade.'

"'I think I must give up the captain.'

"'Certainly, by all means,' interrupted Bryan, 'order him to the right about. Shall I shoot him?'

* *Qu.* Buffon Villa?

"'Oh no, there's no occasion; he is very obedient.'

"'Who the devil is he? What is his name? In what service is he captain?'

"'He is in my service,' replied the lady. 'I loved him very much.'

"'You did?' said Bryan. 'Well?'

"'I don't love him now at all. He sometimes tries to bite me.'

"'The scoundrel!'

"'So I think of turning him off, and giving myself entirely to you.'

"'Best! dearest! What an angel you are! You can't possibly do better.'

"'I think not.'

"'Then throw yourself at once into my arms, and'——

"'Oh no; I can't do that. This is a very high window; and besides, look! they have put bars to it.'

"'Then let me come to you.'

"'Whenever you like—the sooner the better—but stop. Are you blue faced?'

"'Yes; I am very dark in the complexion.'

"'Have you a ring?'

"'Yes.'

"'What is it? Rough or smooth?'

"'A plain one. The ladies, I fancy, like that the best.'

"'Oh yes. And how tall did you say?'

"'Five feet seven inches and three quarters.'

"'Why, that nasty little captain was only three feet two.'

"'Then I fancy he was not in the grenadiers.'

"'Five feet seven! What a beauty you must be,' continued the lady. 'Get to me as soon as you can.'

"'I will call and offer myself to your brother.'

"'He will be delighted to see you, and so shall I. Good-night.'

"'Was there ever such a lucky fellow in the universe?' said Bryan, as he cantered back to Chester—'though Miss Jenks is certainly a bit of a rum one. Who the deuce could that disgusting little captain be? Can it be Fusby of ours? But no; he is more than three feet two. And asking me

so plump about the ring; that shows she's up to snuff. I shall marry her next week, and get my company in a fortnight.'

"Bryan consulted me that night as to his farther proceedings. After turning over many plans, we at last fixed that the boldest way was the best; that he had better go at once to Mr Jenks's house, and open the business in form.

"Before we retired to our couches, Bryan had given me an invitation to his shooting-box next season, and let me into all his intentions about the disposal of his money; and that night, I will be bound for it, if no other in his life, he enjoyed golden dreams.

"Next day, Bryan mounted after parade, and I don't think Chestergate ever gave exit to so finished a dandy. A barber had been curling his hair, his servant brushing his coat half the morning, and such a powerful perfume filled the town as he ambled along the street, that you might have fancied him one of the three Kings of Cologne.

"When he arrived at the gate, he rang the bell with a lordly air; but waited for a long time before any one came to the door. At last it was opened by a slip-shod wench, with long red hair, and Bryan began his interrogatories.

"'Is Mr Jenks at home?'

"'Suppose a be, what's that to you?'

"'I wish to see him.'

"'Like enough; he doan't want to see thee though.'

"'Is he engaged?'

"'Yes, a be.'

"'With company?'

"'Yes; he and missus be shaving the captain?'

"'That cursed captain again.—What did you say, my pretty girl? that your mistress was shaving the captain?'

"'Yes; and cuttin' the nails o' um.'

"'Shaving and cutting his nails! He must be a cursedly odd fellow, this captain. What is his name, my girl?'

"'His name be captain—that be all—his coat be finer than your'n—but missus be tired o' um now; her told me her had got a new sweetheart.'

"'Oh, she did?—did she say any thing more?'

"'Yes; that a were far handsomer, and taller than the captain.'

"'That is very pleasant, at all events,' thought Bryan, as he pulled up his stock. 'Pray, my dear, would you tell Mr Jenks, a gentleman is very anxious to see him on business of importance?'

"'What be your business about, sir? be it any thing out o' the common? he never sees nobody as hasn't summat wonderful to tell him.'

"'Tell him, I have been long very anxious to see him; that I have long had a great curiosity'——

"'A great *curiosity?* And why didn't ye say that afore? He'll see you immediately, and welcome, too. Don't be feared o' the wolf,' she said, as she guided Bryan along the passage, 'he's only stuffed—take care of the fox; he bites sometimes; and keep away from that corner—he ha chained a dog there, as is mad with the heederfobo, to see how long it will take it to die.'

"'The devil he has!' said Bryan, 'I wish I were safe out again.'

"The red-haired housemaid ushered the visitor into a room, with the oddest description of furniture in it Mr Bryan Jones had ever had the happiness to see.

"'Donna be frightened—*some* on um doesn't bite,' said the maid, as she shut the door.

"'And what the deuce do the others do?' said the soldier, in no very comfortable frame of mind.

"The windows were half closed—there were book-shelves round the walls, paroquets, macaws, jackdaws, and all the birds of the air, occupying the places which, in ordinary libraries, are filled with volumes—a squirrel was twirling in its cage, on the table before him, some snakes were writhing in layers of cotton within some network of wire, and four or five dogs, of very foreign appearance, glared with red eyes on the stranger, from their little kennels, planted all around the room, and kept up a low continuous growl, that by no means tended to restore Bryan's equanimity. He stood, with his hand on the hilt of his sword, in case of any unforeseen attack, and began to persuade himself that the stories of

knights-errant, and dragons in enchanted castles, were not such allegories as he supposed. At all events, he was fully convinced, that if he succeeded in carrying off the twenty thousand pounds, he had amply earned it by his exposure of life and limb. At last there arose in the next room the most diabolical squalling, roaring, whistling, scolding, hooting, and howling, that ever fell upon mortal ear. Bryan turned as pale as death, muttered a sort of prayer, and, drawing his sword, stood on the defensive. At this moment the door of the library was opened by a neat, well-dressed, dapper little man, with reverend white hair, growing long and thin down the side of his face, and a cue behind, elegantly tied in a beautiful bag of black silk. He started when he saw the warlike attitude assumed by the gallant lieutenant. That valorous gentleman's blood was now fairly up, and instead of apologising for the extraordinary appearance he presented, he said—

"'Set them all loose at once; none of your palaver, old gentleman; but turn out a crocodile or two—I'll spit them as I would a rabbit!'

"The stranger became a little alarmed in his turn, and, going gently to the door, he desired the same slip-shod damsel who had ushered his visitor in, to desire the captain to walk up stairs, and keep watch in the lobby.

"'Well, thank heaven it's no worse,' thought the brave Bryan; 'I shall soon make mince-meat of a captain three feet high.'

"The gentleman, who was no other than Mr Jenks, now demanded the reason of such unusual behaviour, and also to what circumstance he was indebted for the honour of a visit. Bryan explained pretty well the reason of his alarm, and he perceived that Mr Jenks was considerably pleased with the sensation his collection had excited. He therefore dilated so long on the wonders he saw around him, that insensibly he inveigled his companion into a conversation. Once embarked on his favourite topic, there seemed to be no end of his communicativeness.

"'Pray, have you made comparative physiology your study?' he said with a patronising smile. Now, Mr Bryan

Jones could tell a horse from a cow, and was also a considerable judge of spaniels and pointers, but farther his researches had not extended; not to mention that he had never heard of any such science before. He therefore answered at a venture,—'Oh yes; in fact it is a most delightful study. Comparisons are odorous, as Mrs Malaprop says.'

"'Malaprop? I don't know the name,' replied Mr Jenks; 'is she a naturalist?'

"'Faith I don't know whether she is a naturalist or not, but she's as natural as if she were a real woman.'

"'My dear sir,' exclaimed Mr Jenks, taking out his pocket-book with the greatest animation, 'not a *real woman!* what is the nature of her peculiarity? you will do me the greatest favour in the world if you will tell me where I may meet with her.'

"'Oh you may see her any night you please in Covent Garden.'

"'Thank you, I will certainly find her out next time I go to town. I myself have an instance in this very collection of a very extraordinary *lusus naturæ*. I have a cat, sir, with five legs.'

"'Oh that's nothing at all,' replied Mr Bryan, with the utmost assurance, 'we have a cat in our barracks with nine tails.'

"'You surprise me; have you it with you? That I conclude was the curiosity which induced you to come here. Sir, I am much obliged for your very great politeness. May I see it?'

"'See it! my dear sir, I shall be happy to make you a present of it.'

"The little man jumped up from his seat, and seized the happy lieutenant's hand. 'What have I done,' he said, 'to deserve such kindness, such generosity? Have you any wish for any thing I have got? It shall be yours.'

"'Why, yes, I must confess, Mr Jenks, I had another object in visiting you to-day. You have another object in this house, the possession of which would indeed crown my felicity.' Bryan sighed as he said these words, and looked romantic with all his might.

"'I shall be truly happy, I assure you, captain —— may I beg the favour of your name?'

"'Bryan Jones.'

"'I shall be happy, Captain Bryan Jones, to give you a large vial, containing, I believe, the finest specimen of a bicephalous reptile in England.'

("'My heavens!' thought Bryan, 'here's a pretty fellow, to keep his Bucephalus in a vial'—)

"'Or a box, containing the dorsal vertebræ of an icthyosaurus; or some of the hair of the huge Megatherion that was found a few years ago at the mouth of the Tanais or Don'——

"Bryan bowed very low to all these polite offers, but did not seen to jump at them so zealously as the enthusiast expected.

"'Perhaps,' he continued, 'you have set your heart on some particular object—if so, name it.'

"'Unfortunately I am not acquainted with the name.'

"'That s a pity—can you describe it? is it colœpterous or lepidopterous? terrestrial, aerial, or marine? carnivorous, graminivorous, or omnivorous? oviparous or viviparous? animal, mineral, or vegetable? Whatever I have I shall be happy to give it to you in exchange for your inestimable present of nine-tails; by the beard of Aristotle, half the number would set Buckland dancing.'

"'I believe they would, but really, sir, you embarrass me with your kind offers—my whole ambition has but one aim; it is not for any of your curiosities, packed up in boxes or bottles, that I am anxious; but for one far more valuable, far more lovely, than any of them, the prime jewel of all your possession; your beautiful, your charming'——

"'Miss Sophy!—I know from your rhapsodies all you are about to say. It would, indeed, be dreadful to part with her; so sweet, so gentle; dear, dear, Miss Sophy!'

"'Ah! dear, indeed!' echoed Bryan; 'I think I never saw so perfectly lovely and angelic a creature.'

"'Saw, sir? Where did you see her? I thought no one had seen her but myself.'

"Mr Jenks flushed in the cheek as he said this, and cast a glance of angry suspicion on his visitor.

"'Why, sir, I saw her,' replied the lieutenant; 'and what

is more, I spoke to her; and what is more, it is solely on her account that I came here. Your kindness has already been so excessive, that I hope you will not withdraw it, after having gone so far, but allow me to make a better acquaintance with her, in order to secure her affections.'

"'Oh, you need be under no uneasiness about that. A little kindness is sure to make her fond of any one: indeed, I am so selfish in exacting all her love to myself, that I consider her facility in bestowing her affections one of her principal faults. It is not a very common one in beauties of her sex.'

"'Ah! but if I should be so unfortunate as to fail in acquiring her love!' said Bryan, pretending to look modestly dejected.

"'Why, then, take a stick and give her a thump on the head. She will like you all the better for it.'

"Bryan looked at the old man as he propounded this monstrous idea, and felt very much inclined to kick him out of the room. He laughed, as if he considered the old man's observation a joke.

"'I'm afraid, sir, that would scarcely be the way to conciliate her regards.'

"'The best in the world, my dear sir,—even I myself am very often forced to employ the whip, and leave the marks of it on her shoulders, I assure you.'

"'Well,' thought Bryan, 'if this isn't bedlam it ought to be. First of all, a young lady is courted by a captain three feet high, and turns him off because he bites her; then she pairs his nails to keep him, I suppose, from scratching; and then a horrid old scoundrel like this thrashes his own sister with a whip, till he leaves the marks of it upon her shoulders. The rascal! I've a great mind to swing him out of the window by his pig-tail.' Bryan, however, moderated his wrath, and answered—

"'I hope, sir, when she is mine, she will not require such harsh discipline.'

"'I hope not,' said the other; 'but I can assure you, she suffered more than that when she was in another gentleman's keeping.'

"'Good Heavens, sir! what do you mean by such low, such ribald insinuations? I say, sir, it is impossible she can ever have been in any other person's keeping—what do you mean?'

"'What do I mean, Captain Bryan Jones? I must say, sir, I am astonished at such warmth.—Why, if she were your wife, you could not be more interested. I say, sir, she has been kept, and housed, and fondled by fifty people; I gave her an asylum under this roof after she had been nearly starved and beaten to death while under the protection of an Italian mountebank.'

"'Then, by Heavens, sir,' said Bryan in a prodigious passion, 'you may keep her to yourself! and such a dissolute disreputable couple as you are!—an old scoundrel glorying in the shame of one who he pretends is very dear to him,—devil take me if there is such an unprincipled old rascal unhung.'

"'Sir! what do you mean? do you speak to me?' said the old gentleman, starting up in a tremendous rage; 'you shall answer for this,—I'll unchain the dogs.'

"'If you move from that chair, as I hope to live another moment, I'll run you through the body, you ineffable abortion; so stir not on your peril.'

"'I'll call for the captain.'

"'Captain, major, colonel, field-marshal; call for the whole army list—but if you move one step, I'll break every bone in your body. And what is more, I'll have Miss Sophy in spite of you—and take her with all her faults upon her head; for I know, you old rascal, you only spread these calumnies against her that you may keep her to yourself. And as to your champion, your three feet high captain of the Patagonians, if I but lay my hands on the cuff of his neck, he'll make but one flying jump into the middle of next—week.'

"Bryan's rage knew no bounds; he sputtered forth these and other more terrific denunciations, standing over the astonished Mr Jenks with his sword drawn—'Show me your sister's room this moment, sir, and let me judge of the truth of your story for myself.'

" ' My sister, sir!' said Mr Jenks, in a state of great alarm, ' what do you want with my sister?'

" ' Every thing—herself, her heart, her soul, her body, and every shilling of her fortune.'

" ' Alas! this is too sad a matter, young man; my sister is'——

" ' The loveliest of her sex, and never was under any mountebank's protection but your own.'

" ' Young man, you are terribly deceived; my sister is quite happy; she is harmless, but from her birth she has been insane.'

" ' I knew it; I knew you would try to do me over with some rigmarole story of that kind; but Miss Sophy I will have, whether she is as wise as her noodle of her brother or not. Show me to Miss Sophy this very moment, or, by St David, your life is not worth the lower end of a leek.'

" ' If I do show you into Miss Sophy's presence, I warn you, you will heartily repent of your folly. But since you insist on it, I will.'

" He then conducted Bryan, who still kept his sword under his arm, along several passages, and at length descended into a place like a cellar; at the farther end of the passage there was a door, and beyond all was darkness.

" ' And is it in this dismal den, you hard-hearted old villain, you keep so much beauty in durance vile? Shame on you, shame on you; I will go in, I will comfort the afflicted; I will take her to my arms, and tell her her miseries are over; and depend upon it, old gentleman, we'll have a famous action against you for false imprisonment; swinging damages, you may depend on't.'

" This oration was addressed to Mr Jenks by Bryan, as he was pushing open the door—he entered the palpable obscure, and listening attentively, he heard a low sigh in the corner—' I have come, you see,' he whispered, ' my dearest Sophy, in fulfilment of my promise; I will rescue you from the thraldom of that old rogue, your brother, and we shall be as happy as the Fates will let us.' As he said these soft sentences, he groped with his hand in the darkness—' Ah! I have caught

you at length; I have laid hold of your fur tippet; come forth, my darling, from this pris'——

"But at this moment the fur tippet was snatched, as if by an earthquake, out of his hand; a growl shook the whole cellar where he stood, and Bryan felt himself squeezed nearly to a mummy—'Paws off, paws off,' roared the disconsolate lieutenant. 'You infernal old Jenks, you have sent me into a den of lions; here's Nero or Wallace tearing me with all his might; lights, lights! help, help!'

"All this while he kept struggling with his invisible foe; but the gripe of the ferocious monster grew tighter and tighter. At last, just as his strength was failing, the door was opened, and Mr Jenks and the servant maid appeared with candles. A few blows, well laid on, made the horrid animal relax its hold of the now breathless Bryan, and before him he saw an enormous black bear, puffing with its exertions, and still glaring at him with the most ferocious eyes.

"'Is this the Miss Sophy you meant, sir?' said Mr Jenks, now under no uneasiness from the indignation of poor Bryan; 'I hope you are convinced that what I told you was the truth?'

"'Not quite, sir; who was the lady I spoke to last night? she certainly invited me to this house, accepted me in place of a captain somebody, a woer she discarded, and told me to make my proposals as soon as possible to you.'

"'Ah! that, I suppose, was my poor sister; and since you have been undeceived so far, you shall be satisfied quite. You shall see her before you leave the house.'

"In a few minutes Bryan, having recovered his wind, was conducted to a parlour, in which a middle-aged lady was sitting, with no symptoms of insanity about her, except a very wandering expression in her eyes. Her manner was stately and composed, and her language rather formal and stiff. She bowed on Bryan's entering.

"'You see, madam,' he said, 'I visit you according to my promise.'

"'I have expected you for some time; I told the captain I should dispense with his visits in future.'

" ' Indeed—and what did he say to that?'

" ' Oh, he said nothing; he don't speak; I never had any one that spoke except yourself.'

" ' He must be rather dull company, I imagine.'

" ' Not half so lively as you; but do you know, if it were not for that, I think he is far handsomer than you are?'

" ' You are plain, I perceive, Miss Jenks, and I like your sincerity. Have you thought of the offer I made you last night?'

" ' Oh! yes. I have thought of it ever since,—but I don't think you are so blue in the face as you told me.'

" ' Why, no, not exactly blue; but dark, you perceive; very dark.'

" ' I should have liked you better if you had been green and yellow; but bless me! I haven't asked about your tail'——

" Lieutenant Bryan Jones, of his Majesty's —th regiment of foot, hereupon rose and made a low bow to the lady—who bowed very politely in return—and said to him just as he was opening the door to effect his retreat,—' It is perhaps better for you to go—the captain has had his nails paired, and will do very well; I like little monkeys better than great baboons.' Bryan hurried out of the house with the utmost expedition, running divers risks of hydrophobia and scorpion stings in his progress, and as he jumped on his horse and galloped off, he heard Mr Jenks bellowing after him—' Don't forget to send me the noveni-caudal specimen of the feline tribe.'

" Bryan kept the adventure a profound secret from all but me; and I don't think any man in the regiment was so profoundly happy as he, when the route came for merry Carlisle, and took us far away from the scene of his disaster."

CHAPTER VII.

It was now the fourth night of my visit to the gallant and hospitable ——th; and one day seemed just like another in the number of anecdotes related after dinner; or much more abundant. For my own part, I enjoyed the thing amazingly. My appetite for stories seemed, like the jealousy in Othello, to grow by what it fed on. I have little doubt if I had remained a week longer, I should have recollected some notable achievement of my own; but when the wine is tolerable, I have always found it pleasanter to listen than to talk. I prepared myself, accordingly, on the succeeding day, for an evening of quiet enjoyment, more especially as some races which were to be held in the neighbourhood would most probably carry off the greater number of the officers, and leave us quite a snug comfortable party. We mustered only nine at dinner; Captain Daisy in the chair. This gentleman had been absent for a short time, and I had not yet had the pleasure of seeing him at the mess. He was tall, and very good-looking;—with such a peculiar expression of joy in his countenance, that I made sure he had recently met with some unexpected piece of good fortune: the tone of his voice also was the most exhilarating I had ever heard. He spoke as if he felt considerable difficulty in repressing a laugh, which, though prevented with great effort from bursting forth at his lips, made up for it by grinning most hilariously out of the brightest and most mirth-loving eyes you can possibly imagine. I anticipated great amusement from so gay and happy-looking a companion, and was well pleased that my place at table was next to him, that I might enjoy his fun to the very utmost. It is impossible to put down upon paper the effect of his manner. On me it was electrical; the moment I looked at him, I felt all my features forming themselves into a grin; and when he spoke, though it was only to say the day had been rather warm, I was so infected with the jocularity of his tone, that I fairly burst into a laugh. All his other incidental remarks were equally irresistible, and

though his conversation, if you attended only to the words of it, had nothing very funny or even lively in it, still his gloriously jocund visage, and joyous chuckling voice, were sure to put you into good humour, and most probably, as was the case with me, keep you laughing whenever he opened his mouth. I certainly envied him the possession of a countenance which so admirably supplied the place of wit. Liston never said any thing that had half the effect on my risible muscles as the mere visage of the merry-looking Captain Daisy. At the same time I must observe there was nothing ludicrous in his manner;—no buffoonery or grimacing about any of his observations; in fact, he was a man of the most gentlemanlike appearance, and altogether a perfect model of a gay, dashing, laughing young fellow, with most exuberant spirits, and an almost uncontrollable disposition to indulge in a "guffaw." I did not expect much in the way of amusement from the others at table; and yet how often are first impressions in this, as in all other things, the very reverse of the truth. How many sulky surly-looking fellows have disgusted you with their sour faces the moment they took their seats opposite to you in the coach, whom you have parted with, at the end of the journey, believing them the best tempered and most obliging of men. In the same way, how often what you would call a nice good-tempered countenance belongs to a nasty discontented puppy, who, before he has been ten minutes in your company, infects you with a prodigious inclination to mistake his nose for the stiff handle of a door. One or two of the party this night looked as stupid, uninteresting gentlemen as you would wish to see, with faces conveying no one expression more than another, and puzzling you (from their utter want of all points of difference with the greater proportion of other faces) with the haunting conviction that you have met with them before. One gentleman, a stranger, and in plain clothes, tormented me all the early part of the night with a face of this kind. Large blue eyes, light hair, large mouth—with the muscles of his countenance in a state of profound repose. I took a dislike to the fellow from the utter inexpressiveness of his looks, and was almost certain at the same time that this was not the first time we

had met. I was in hopes his name might help me to ascertain whether I was acquainted with him or not, and I took advantage in the swell of the conversation to address myself to the president aside.

"Pray, can you tell me who that un-individual is next to young Thomson?"

Captain Daisy looked at the gentleman I alluded to with an expression of repressed mirth, more catching than the broadest humour, and answered in his own peculiarly joyous voice—

"The gentleman with the light hair and blue eyes, do you mean?—I really can't tell his name."

"Why, is there any thing ludicrous in his appellation? Is he a second edition of Mr H.?"

"Mr Aitch? I never heard of him. He is a friend of young Thomson."

"So I suppose—but come, tell me, is there any thing particularly absurd about him?"

"Not in the least, that I am aware of," replied the captain, looking more and more amused, and, I must add, amusing, every word he spoke.

"I am sure," I rejoined, "there is some story about him; he looks a capital subject for a ludicrous tale."

"Does he? I am sorry I have no turn for the ludicrous."

"You wrong yourself, I am sure. I shall endeavour to find out his history from some one else."

The captain made no reply, but looked most provokingly mirthful. My curiosity was piqued. What the deuce can it be that amuses Daisy so much in this very commonplace looking mortal? I resolved to rest contented in my ignorance for a while, in the hopes that a few more circulations of the bottle would evolve the secret.

"What a number of our men have gone to the races today," said the captain to me, with the same superabundant jocularity in his eyes.

"Yes," I replied—"we shall have full accounts of the day's proceedings when they return. Did they expect much amusement?"

"Just the ordinary amusement of a race-course, I suppose; nothing more."

"What! nothing particularly comical?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"Come, my dear sir, you don't mean that. What is it? something very laughable, I daresay?"

"Upon my honour, sir, I have no means of even guessing whether they have any reason to anticipate a pleasanter day than usual or not."

His words would certainly have led me to believe that there was nothing very much out of the usual course in the races at ———, but then his eyes and even his tongue were at variance with his language. Here was another mystery: what the deuce could there be in a few young officers going to an exhibition of the sort that should make Captain Daisy so prodigiously delighted?

"It is cruel," I said, "to tantalise me in this way; I'm sure there's something very funny going on at the races; some trick; some quiz or other on the provincials; come, do tell us."

"Sir," said Captain Daisy, with a facetious glance which it is impossible to describe, "I know of no tricks or quizzes, and have at present very different things to think of from any thing that others might think funny."

I began to be very much provoked at the fellow's selfishness in keeping all the good things to himself; and, by way of turning the conversation, and giving him an opportunity of enjoying his laugh by himself, I spoke to my neighbour on the other side, and made some commonplace remark or other on the wines.

"Yes," said he, "we have it very good—Daisy is our taster. Whose wine is this, Daisy?"

"Don't you know?—why this is the wine I had of the man at Southampton."

"Indeed!" replied the other; "how much it has improved lately."

"I am glad you think so," said Daisy.

I looked at him as he said this, but some merrier thought than ever seemed to possess him now. His good-humour, in fact, was so evident, that I addressed him at once.

"Come now, Captain Daisy, it is very hard to keep one

on the tenter-hooks so long—there must surely be something in the history of this wine that amuses—I see there must be something curious about it. I see it by your face."

"By heaven, sir, this is past endurance. Am I never to have rest? Do you not know that I am at this moment the most miserable dog in England, and all in consequence of this detestable face of mine? But excuse me, sir, excuse me. Strangers are always making these mistakes. I think it very unkind that some one didn't tell you of my peculiarity of countenance, sir. I *can't* look sorry, or even sedate, no, not if the rope were round my neck. Hixie, you should have explained it to this gentleman."

"Ah! so I should," said old Hixie; "but I am sure no insult was intended."

"Oh, no," replied the captain; "I am well aware of that. My miserable experience has now taught me to make allowance for such mistakes. I hope you will forgive my abruptness, sir, but my spirits at this moment are peculiarly depressed. At all times far from lively, I am at present in the lowest despondency, or even, I may say, despair."

This was accompanied with the same joyousness of look and tone as ever; but a glance from Hixie showed me he was serious, and I, though with some difficulty, assumed a sadness of expression more accordant with his words than their accessaries.

"I am very sorry, Captain Daisy," I said, "that I should have been misled by appearance, but still hope that you overrate the miseries of your situation."

"Impossible, sir. Till this infernal countenance buries its facetious features in the wrinkles of old age, or the dust of death, there can be no happiness, I am well assured, for the unfortunate Joseph Daisy. It is a thousand times worse than the 'double-ganger' of the German romances. What bitterer curse can be imagined by the most fiendish enemy of man than to send a person of acute sensibilities and hypochondriacal disposition grinning through the world like a Merry-Andrew at a fair, with a heart crushed and broken by losses and disappointment, and a face at the same time capable of no variety of expression, but at all times and sea-

sons jocund with perpetual mirth? Would to heaven I could look melancholy for one whole day, it might be the means of saving me still!"

"Did you ever try starvation and want of sleep?" asked old Hixie. "I remember when we were skurrying about after old Soult, there was a prodigious lengthening of face among the lightest-hearted of our men. There was Sergeant Perrin of ours; by George! if you had seen him after we marched from that infernal town up in the mountains there—what the deuce was the name of it?—well, never mind—a great long straggling place it is, with the convent, you recollect, just under the citadel—this Sergeant Perrin, you see, was"——

"My dear Hixie," interrupted Captain Daisy, "I have tried every thing. If abstinence and want of sleep could banish my intolerable infirmity, from this day I should wage interminable war with feather-beds and butchers. But, alas! sleeplessness has no other effect upon me than an apparent increase of good-humour—starvation I have never tried; I am certain it would have the same result."

"But why do you object to a jolly countenance?" continued old Hixie; "for my part, I like to see you. I hate all your steady, quiet, thoughtful-looking fellows—young ones I mean—for, says I, what right has any one to look grave and gloomy till he begins to be bald; or, at any rate, till he gets his majority?—No, no, it may do very well for a general, or even a colonel, to appear now and then as if he were thinking; but as to lieutenants and captains, not to mention the cornets, I never could see what business they had to do any thing but drink and laugh, obey orders, and flirt a little whenever they had the chance. Your face ought to be a fortune to you."

"I don't know whether it OUGHT to be a fortune to me or not; experience has told me very differently; but as there is no secret in any occurrence it has caused, I will tell you how I am situated"—and here he attempted a sigh, which sounded as like a laugh as can well be imagined—"All my miseries, all my misfortunes are occasioned by the infamous jocundity of this most insufferable face. When I was about fifteen,

my father, who had remained a widower for many years, took it into his head to marry again. The lady he chose was about fifty, very rich, and to all appearance a confirmed old maid. Great, therefore, on all hands, was the wonder, when the prim and formal Miss Melton condescended to become Mrs Daisy. For a year or two after the marriage, I was very little at home, being either on the continent or at school. At length, when I was about eighteen, and had finished my education, as it is called—that is, had got so far on in Latin and Greek as to have long ago forgotten the Eton and Port-Royal grammar—I came home for three months, preparatory to joining the —th, in which I had got a commission. Those were the happiest, I may say the only happy days I ever spent. My countenance, joyous as it was, did not for that short period belie my feelings. My stepmother had no family, and had continued her attachment, the same as before her marriage, to a Miss Harriet Melton, an orphan niece. This young lady lived in the house, and in all respects was treated, both by my father and her aunt, as their daughter. It was not long before I found that I should have no objection to give my father a still farther claim to consider her in that light. In short, as I do not excel in descriptions of that sort, I shall only tell you, that, as was very naturally to be expected, I fell violently in love. The girl was very young, very artless, and saw so few people besides myself, that perhaps you will not think it altogether vanity in me if I tell you that I never doubted for a moment that my affection was returned. In fact, how could I? Every thing seemed as if our marriage were a foreordained thing by the principal parties whose consent was necessary to such an event. My stately stepmother ceased to be formal, my father was kinder than ever, Harriet was as intimate, though a thousand times dearer than a sister; and for that glorious quarter of a year the course of true love did run smooth. At length the time drew near for me to join the regiment. I rode round among our neighbours to wish them good-bye. My best and kindest friend had always been Dr Glover, the rector of our parish. He had retained, at his years, all the spirits and juvenility of my own age. We were rather, indeed,

playfellows, than an old man and a boy. I was sincerely sorry to part with him, more especially as at this time he was suffering severely from illness. In fact, he was in bed when I called; but when he understood the object of my coming, he sent for me to his chamber. What a change had taken place in my kind old friend's looks! It is indeed astonishing what a dreadful effect a very few days' illness has on the old —his cheeks were sunken, his eyes glazed, and his hand, as he held it out to me, shook as if with palsy.

"'Ah, Joey, my dear friend,' he said, 'you are going out into a wild and dangerous world. God knows if we shall ever meet again.'

"'I hope, sir, that you may live for many years; and see me yet a general of division, at the very least.'

"'All things are possible; but that is, at all events, one of the improbables. Seriously, my dear boy, I fear I cannot long survive. The battering-rams of these acute pains will soon demolish the old walls of this nearly mouldering citadel; but whether I am here when you return, or my place by that time shall know me no more, be assured many an anxious thought, and many an earnest prayer, were given by the old parson to his young companion. God bless you, my boy!—Ha, I'm glad you keep up your spirits so well.'

"'My dear sir,' I sobbed out, 'do not say my spirits are good. I am wretched at the thoughts of leaving my friends, and especially you, who always have been the kindest and most indulgent.'

"'Your looks and stifled laughter, my dear Joey, contradict your speech. 'Tis, perhaps, all right that it should be so. What community is there between age and youth, or between health and sickness?'

"'Believe me, sir,' I went on, 'I am really very sorry.'

"'Young gentleman,' exclaimed the doctor, 'methinks you might have chosen some fitter time and place for your frivolous jokes than the sick-room, perhaps, the death-bed, of an old man. Farewell, sir; for the sake of your father I will try to forget this scene. There is room enough in the world for you to laugh and enjoy yourself, without bringing

your heartless joviality here—leave me, sir; I have been deceived.'

"I knew it would be of no use saying another word, as the more I said, the happier and more frivolous he would have thought me; so, with my heart almost breaking with sorrow and indignation at my own unmanageable features, I rushed out of the room. The same thing, though in different degrees, happened to all the old friends to whom I paid my respects.

"I parted with my father and stepmother in as hurried a way as I could. But, alas! this only made matters worse. When I expressed my sorrow at leaving home, they told me not to make any protestations of that kind till I had learned to accommodate my looks and voice to my language. After shaking hands with them, a ceremony which the lady went through with a stiffness I had never remarked in her towards me before, just as I was leaving the room in a state of real distress, I heard her say to my father,—'Such want of feeling is intolerable; the boy has no more affection than a cat.' I did not catch my father's reply, but I have no doubt it was in the same strain. Luckily there is no mode of discovering the spirits from a man's handwriting. I left a note for Harriet, begging her to excuse the ceremony of leave-taking, as it was a most painful effort, and much better avoided for the sake of all parties. Next day I started for the depot, and faithfully announced my safe arrival to my friends at home. No answer was returned for a long time. Mean while, I had become acquainted with my brother officers, and in spite of all my efforts to explain to them that I was of a very hypt and melancholy temperament, they persisted in considering me the liveliest fellow in the world, and treated me accordingly. At length an incident occurred which gave me inexpressible uneasiness. Our colonel, who has since got upon half-pay, was a very pleasant, unassuming man—happy when he saw his officers well pleased, and on that very account particularly kind and hospitable to me. His wife was in delicate health, and for the sake of air and exercise, was accustomed to drive herself out in a very nice little donkey

chaise. All the long summer days she amused herself driving about the green shady lanes in that part of Devonshire where we were stationed, and some of the officers were occasionally asked to accompany her and the major's wife on horseback, and afterwards dine at the colonel's. The colonel himself sometimes joined these ruralising parties; and on one occasion he and I, and two or three others, were chosen as the ladies' escort. After a day of quiet enjoyment we were returning homewards; the donkey, with the obstinacy of all its tribe, stood stock still when they attempted to pull it round. I rode up to offer my assistance, the brute ran backward into a ditch, frightened the ladies nearly to death, and upset the little carriage, though luckily without any injury to life or limb. Poor Mrs ——, what from her naturally weak nerves, and very infirm health, was nearly hysterical with alarm. Some of the party galloped off to the barracks for the carriage, some endeavoured to extricate the upset vehicle, and I did my best to reassure the trembling and agitated lady. My success was such as might have been expected. The major's wife, whose nerves were better than her companion's, evidently showed how disgusted she was with my conduct. The sufferer herself, though nearly fainting, begged me to retire, and with many professions of sorrow for the accident, I was glad to leave them, and busy myself about releasing the donkey from his trammels. The colonel looked at me when I joined them with an expression of displeasure I had never seen before. 'This is no laughing matter, Mr Daisy—there is nothing ludicrous that I can see in an invalid lady meeting with a dangerous accident.' I told him, with the greatest sincerity, how much I lamented the occurrence. But he turned away from me without uttering a word.

"I addressed myself to a young cornet who had joined at the same time as myself. 'What a melancholy thing this is, Monro;—I fear it will be a serious thing for poor Mrs ——.'

"'Sir?' said Monro; looking very cold and stern at the same time.

"I repeated my remark.

"'I think, sir,' he replied, 'you would show better taste

if you tried to conceal your enjoyment of so serious an accident.'

"'Sir,' I exclaimed, 'what do you mean by that? do you fancy I am amused at any thing so serious as danger to Mrs ——?'

"'I shall take no notice of such buffoonery, Mr Daisy. Your attempt to make me join in your mirth, sir, aggravates your want of feeling.'

"'Want of feeling! Mr Monro. I consider your words ungentlemanly and insulting, and cast back buffoonery in your teeth.'

"'Very well, sir; of course my conduct is clear.'

"At this moment the colonel came up. 'Mr Daisy,' he said, 'I could not have thought it possible, did I not see with my own eyes, that any one holding his majesty's commission, and therefore the rank of a gentleman, could be guilty of such unfeeling, such unmanly conduct. From this moment we are strangers, sir. Let me not detain you from returning to quarters.'

"Knowing how useless remonstrance was, I took the hint, mounted my horse, and galloped off. That evening, as I had expected, I received a message from Monro. The person who brought it to me behaved in as uncourteous a manner as he could. Without a moment's hesitation I accepted the challenge; only hoping that one lucky bullet would disfigure my unfortunate countenance, and free me from such mistakes in future. We met—at the first fire my antagonist fell. I rushed up, now nearly frantic with regret, gazed on the receding colour and glazing eye of my victim. 'Oh, heavens!' I exclaimed, 'it wanted only this—this is the end of all.'

"'For shame! for shame!' cried Monro's second—'will you laugh and look delighted on the man you have murdered? By heaven, 'twould be a good deed to send a bullet through your heart, and rid the world of a monster.'

"Before I could reply, I was hurried off by my second; forced into a post-chaise; and when I waited a moment or two, expecting him to jump in beside me, he said, 'Thus far, Mr Daisy, I have given you my assistance, principally because no one else would, but as to staying for one minute

longer than actually necessary with such a disgusting, cold-blooded, laughing, murdering scoundrel, I would rather associate with the hangman.'

"Luckily Monro was not mortally wounded. The newspapers were full of the adventure. The officers, upon all the circumstances being explained to them by the colonel, were unanimous in sending me to Coventry; I had the good fortune to effect an exchange into this regiment, where, the very first day of my appearing at mess, I took the precaution of presenting each of the officers with an affidavit made before a magistrate, that my looks were not to be depended on; and that so far from being the laughing *pococurante* mortal which my face made me be thought, I was in reality very sober and unhappy.

"Monro recovered; but the whole story had been represented to my father in the very blackest colours. His wife conveyed his displeasure in a letter to me. 'Your father,' she wrote, 'who for the last three weeks has been stretched on a bed of sickness, has heard of your conduct. At one time neither he nor I could have believed such behaviour possible; but the manner in which you insulted Dr Glover, who died about a fortnight after your departure, your unfeeling and unnatural joy at leaving your paternal hearth, and the sneering note which you left for my niece Miss Melton, all have too surely convinced us that your laughing and gibbering over the distress of an anguished lady, and your glee over the all but murdered body of an honourable and high-principled young man, are no malicious fictions, but too sad, too true realities. I do not ask you to this house. In fact, your father cannot think of exposing himself, at this present dangerous and painful crisis of his disorder, to the ribald jocularity of his inhuman offspring.'

"In about a fortnight after this precious epistle, a short note was put into my hands. 'Sir,—Your poor father died here last night; his illness being greatly aggravated by his knowledge of your infamously unfeeling conduct on several recent occasions. The funeral takes place this day week, and if you can repress your happiness so far as to avoid offending other persons' feelings, I am desired by Mrs Daisy to invite you to attend it.' This was from the undertaker.

"I pass over the hideous interval between the time of receiving this note and the day of the funeral.

"I did not present myself till the cavalcade was about to start; on many accounts I kept my handkerchief to my eyes; one of them was, that I might the better conceal my unfortunate features. On our return from the church, I scarcely dared to present myself to the widow, or even to Harriet. I felt that I should only be confirming them more strongly in their belief of my utter want of sympathy and feeling. But my grief for my father's loss was deep and sincere. I will not rest on how my sorrow was increased by a knowledge of the sentiments towards me with which he died. I visited the scenes of my boyhood on the evening of the day of the funeral—the bend of the river where I had bathed—places I had fished—and I sat down in a retired part of the grounds, beside a little fountain, where I had often rested with Harriet in the first days of our acquaintance. Here I gave way to my grief; and, after a paroxysm into which I was thrown by the acuteness and complication of my griefs, I was aware of a light foot approaching me along one of the walks, and in a moment, Harriet, clothed in the deepest mourning, stood before me. My head was rested on my hand—I did not dare to raise it.

"'Joseph,' she cried, when she saw me; 'I did not expect to find you here.'

"'And why not, Harriet?'

"'Because I thought such melancholy scenes as these not at all adapted to one of so lively a disposition.'

"'Ah, Harriet! have you also turned against me? I thought in you, at least, I had one friend who would not believe me the callous unfeeling being you have heard me represented.'

"'You had! but why, oh why will you be your own greatest enemy; why will you not learn to restrain your exuberant spirits? I told them I could not believe you were so heartless.'

"'But they would not be persuaded that I was anything but the most selfish and unnatural of mankind. You know, Harriet, how fondly I loved my father. Can you believe that

I feel no sorrow for his death?' I kept my face still hidden with my hand.

"'I always had better hopes of you,' she replied, 'than others. I never could believe you were so hardened, as to have no feeling for the sufferings of others. I shut my ears when they talked of your treatment of Dr Glover. I would not listen when they told me of your shooting a companion, and then laughing at his dying agonies; and, above all, I had an assured confidence that this awful domestic calamity would fill you with overwhelming sorrow.'

"I cast my handkerchief to the ground, started from my seat, and flinging my arms round her, said, 'Bless you, my own kind Harriet, for these words; the sweetest I have heard for many a day. Do I, indeed, look the careless unsuffering wretch you had imagined?'

"She looked up into my face. There stood I, with the most provoking simper on my countenance—my lips screwed into a most quizzical resemblance of a laugh—my voice nearly choking, as if with mirth. She shuddered as she looked at me, and disengaged herself from me in an instant.

"'Joseph,' she said, 'I believe it all. Unhappy being, have you no heart—no sympathy? Is a father's death a subject for your jokes? Forbear: the person who behaves as you do is not a man, but a monster.' She turned away as she said this. As she left me, I burst into incontrollable sobs of real misery. I threw myself on the ground, and cursed my unfortunate fate.

"I retired to the village inn, and did not present myself next day at the opening of the will, to which I had been invited by the attorney. I heard, however, the particulars. In fact it was soon very well known throughout the neighbourhood. I walked the first stage on my way to rejoin the regiment. Two men were making me the subject of their conversation as they travelled along the road.

"'So young Daisy be disinherited,' said one.

"'Sarved un right,' replied the other; 'the disnatural young rascal.'

"'The widow may leave him the property if she like; that's put all down in the will.'

"'She won't, though, surely.'

"'Why, you doan't know; he may repent.'

"'Not he; why, he caught the young lady in the woods, and laughed at the whole lot on 'em with all his might. I doan't think the ould lady will ever leave he a fardon.'

"This information was not quite correct; I was cut off with a very moderate annuity, and the trustees were directed to put me in possession of the whole estate if my conduct entirely changed, and I settled down into a quiet sedate character.

"Some months passed on; my letters, both to the widow and her niece, were returned to me unopened, and the merriest looking of his Majesty's subjects was perhaps also the most miserable. A fortnight or three weeks ago I received a cold formal intimation that my presence was required at the Hall. I set off with no anticipation of any thing but a renewal of the painful mistakes of which I had been so long the victim; and was, in fact, so anxious to avoid irritating my relations by the unfortunate hilarity of my appearance, that I stopped at the village inn, and sent up a note announcing my arrival. I assured them at the same time that I was quite unhappy at my exclusion from their friendship, and that my conscience acquitted me of any intentional slight, or the shadow of unkindness. Protestations unfortunately were of no avail. My step-mother, still in the deepest mourning, received me with more stiffness and stateliness than ever. Even Harriet, with whom, at one time, I had been so intimate, so open, so unreserved, was evidently displeased. And as to an old gentleman, of very staid and sober demeanour, to whom I was introduced as one of my father's executors, he could scarcely repress his anger at what he considered my unfeeling and ill-timed happiness.

"'You are sent for, Mr Daisy,' said my stepmother, 'to be presented to Mr Davies, that he may judge for himself whether your father's kind intentions towards you ought yet to be fulfilled.'

"'It is useless, madam,' said the old gentleman, without giving me leave to speak, 'perfectly useless; a person so lost to all delicacy as to look so boisterously mirthful on an occa-

sion of this sort, is certainly not altered from what he used to be.'

" ' Excuse me, sir,' I interrupted, nearly distracted, and quite broken in spirit by such persevering misapprehensions ; ' appearances are against me, I own.'

" ' There is no use, young man, of concealing your laughter ; out with it, and let us see at once how laughable you consider your mother's distress.'

" ' This is too much, indeed, sir : there is one person who, I believe, at one time had some little confidence in my good qualities ; I am sorry she is not here : might I see Miss Melton for a few minutes ?'

" ' Certainly,' replied the old lady ; ' though I can't see what good purpose such an interview will serve ; you will not persuade her to be so light-hearted as you are yourself. You will find her in the library.'

" ' Harriet,' I exclaimed, ' for heaven's sake take compassion on me : go and persuade your aunt that I am more miserable than you can imagine ; by all the happiness of our younger days—by the memory of the times I so fondly remember, when we were all the world to each other, do not for a moment believe that my heart participates in the unfortunate joyousness of my countenance.'

" ' I wish I could believe what you say—you can easily imagine how long I struggled against the conviction that you were the intolerable monster you were painted.'

" ' And if I could indeed persuade you that my features alone were in fault, might I hope for a return of those happy days ?'

" ' Ah, why not ?—how delighted we should all be !'

" ' Then do, my dear Harriet, go and tell your aunt that indeed, indeed, I am a most disconsolate, wretched fellow,—and that I wish my face were as rueful as an owl's.'

" ' I'll go and try,' replied the girl ; ' for I really begin to think it must actually be the case.'

" And away she went, leaving me in greater hopes than I had ever yet allowed myself to entertain.

" My father's picture was over the mantel-piece ; I looked up at it, and recollecting all the kindnesses I had experienced, and above all, the melancholy estrangement from me which

had embittered his last hours, I took out my handkerchief and wiped off the involuntary tears which were coursing down my face.

" ' Laughing,' exclaimed a voice behind me, which I recognised as that of Mr Davies; ' the parricide! must he come hither to grin with fiendish delight over the very picture of his deceased parent! Depend on't, Mr Daisy, you shall never possess one foot of this land while I retain any power. No excuse, sir; your very eyes are red with your suppressed enjoyment,—your voice is broken,—go hence, sir; I am empowered by your mother, sir, to give you notice to leave this house, sir. We both of us are now persuaded that the story trumped up by you and Miss Melton is a plot to deceive us. It is impossible your looks can be involuntary; —retire, sir.'

" Would you believe it! I was so dispirited and cowed by continual persecutions, that, without saying a word, I took up my hat and walked as rapidly as I could to the inn. I only waited till a chaise could be got ready; and as I was stepping into it, a boy put a slip of paper into my hand. On it was written: ' Do not despair. You have one friend, who will be your untiring advocate.' It had no signature, and it needed none. I have worn it near my heart ever since."

" Then, by Jingo, Captain Daisy," said old Hixie, " you have no business to despair. A woman is never defeated when she once takes up the cause of a good-looking, handsome young fellow. We shall see you Squire of Daisy Hall yet, sitting viz-a-vee, as they say in France, to Mrs Harriet, and feeling almost, if not quite, as happy as you look."

The gentleman towards the head of the table, whom I have described as being in possession of so uninteresting and undefined a countenance, was now emboldened either by the wine he had drunk, or the communicativeness of the president, and volunteered his story. But just at this moment my wrist is sore with writing, and some careless fellow has mislaid my dictionary; so that the difficult words he made use of might not be very accurately spelt; and I will, therefore, keep his adventures till I have refreshed myself with a tumbler or two of grog, and Walker makes his reappearance.

CHAPTER VIII.

We all prepared to listen very attentively to the pale-faced gentleman's narrative. There was certainly something very odd in his appearance, from the very absence of any thing odd about him. His nose was exactly like every body else's nose; his eyes, lips, brow, cheeks, and chin in no respect differed from the eyes, lips, cheeks, brow, and chin of the greater number of human beings. His very complexion was the most undistinguishable thing you can imagine; he seemed, in fact, the representative of his species—a man, and nothing more. The longer I gazed at him, the more universal his countenance appeared, till at last a sort of awe mingled with my wonder. I thought of ghosts, and ghouls, and vampires, and all the other "tales of the wild and wonderful," that had frightened me in my youth; and the rest of the party seemed to share in my feelings, and to drink with redoubled desperation, as if for the purpose of keeping up their courage. But the oddest thing of all was, that the fellow was not at all ill-looking; there was nothing in the least unpleasing in his appearance; his figure was good; his manners easy and gentlemanly; and, when I come to reflect on my feelings seriously, I am half inclined to believe that the aforesaid endeavours to sustain our courage had a great deal to do with our impressions of the stranger's physiognomy.

"I am very much obliged to Captain Graves," he began, "for having introduced me to this party; though I must confess, that, till a few hours ago, I never had the pleasure of his acquaintance."

"Then, by the powers," said Captain Graves, whose tongue was a native of Tipperary, "you've a mighty short mimory of your own; for I'm cursed if I haven't known you for a dozen years at least."

"I wish it were so," replied the stranger. "My name, gentleman, is John Fyshe."

"The devil a bit of it," exclaimed the captain; "your name is Andrew Manners; you live in the good town of

Norwich; and, I'll be bound, you've as good stuff in your cellar as any gentleman need wish to tipple; I remember it yet."

"I never had the good fortune to see the town of Norwich; and I must profess myself entirely ignorant of Mr Andrew Manners."

"Well, say on, in the devil's name," replied the captain, looking considerably puzzled, "and tell us *who* you really are; if you're not Mr Manners, I fancy you must have been changed for him at nurse."

"This mistake of Captain Graves's appears no doubt very wonderful to you," continued the stranger; "but to me such things have happened so frequently, that they now give me neither uneasiness nor surprise. When he addressed me on the street, I was unwilling to deprive him of the pleasure of seeing an old friend; and it was perhaps a piece of unkindness in me to make this discovery, and show that his hospitality had been wasted on a person he had never seen before."

"By no means," said the captain, "for, now that I look at you again, I could swear you were Jem Callaghan, a second cousin of my own, so you're quite a jewel of a boy—you're a sort of foundling hospital for one's missing friends. I'm very glad to have made your acquaintance, Mr Fyshe; if you're indeed Mr Fyshe, and not his twin brother."

"I was very early left my own master," resumed the stranger; "and with regard to worldly matters, I had very little to complain of—a good estate in the county palatine, a capital house, pleasant neighbourhood, and an excellent library (for I confess myself a bookworm), made me, at three-and-twenty, as comfortable as any one of moderate ambition could desire. I will not conceal from you, at the same time, that the other ingredient which is generally thought indispensable to a young man's happiness (I mean love) was not wanting. My estate had become enamoured of two very beautiful farms which lay next to it, and my guardians had made proposals to the fascinating acres in my minority. They told me the only burden upon them was a very pretty young lady, and an annuity of fifty pounds a-year

to her *gouvernante*. I was very well pleased with this arrangement, and waited with some impatience for the arrival of Miss Mervyn, who had constantly resided in London, to receive from her own lips the sanction of approval, which *my* guardians had already received from hers. We had never met, and Fancy was of course busy in his usual occupation of a portrait painter. My sage advisers had constantly dinned into my ears, that the owner of so valuable a farm as Oulsley, and so extensive a manor as Elmdale, could not fail to be all my fancy painted her. And in this persuasion Fancy did not spare a single weapon from the armoury of Beauty. Smiles, and dark blue eyes, and ringlets, and snowy necks, were heaped in great profusion on the heiress of Elmdale manor. But fancy portraits, though pleasant enough for a while, only make one sigh the more anxiously for a glimpse of the original. My aunt, who was a widow, kept my house for me. She had one daughter, at that time very young;—and these two used often to laugh in a very provoking way at my passion for the fair unknown. Hannah Meynell —that was my cousin's name—was a nice, quiet, unpretending sort of girl;—with one of those unambitious kind of faces that sometimes actually startle you with their beauty when lighted up by some suddenly excited feeling, though in general not at all remarkable either for good looks or the contrary. But Hannah was always so kind-hearted, so good-natured, and so thoroughly amiable in all her thoughts, words, and deeds, that she was a great favourite with every one who knew her. As for me, I was very proud of her acquirements —as I flattered myself they were in some measure owing to my exertions. We read together, I directed her studies, and, in fact, I could not have been fonder of the little creature if I had been her brother.

"At last I could submit no longer to my state of suspense as to the future Mrs Fyshe. I resolved to go up to town, and at all events SEE the lady, whether I might summon courage to hint about our farther proceedings or not. Accordingly, my trunks were packed by the careful hands of my aunt and cousin. I received packages and directions without number; my aunt sent new orders to her milliner, Hannah

her watch and some of her trinkets to be repaired; and, in truth, when I looked over the list of commissions I had to execute, I thought my friends had left me very little leisure in which to play the wooer. But time passed away; the trunks were corded and directed, the adieus said, and the Red Rover conveyed me in a very short space of time to the comfortable coffeeroom in Hatchett's, Piccadilly.

"Whilst eating my mutton-chop, preparatory to going to the play, I was very much pleased with the unceremonious friendliness of the gentlemen who sat at the other little tables round the room. Every now and then one or other of them rose and chatted with me a few minutes. This visit to the metropolis occurred, I must tell you, in the heat of a general election, when politics ran unusually high. One old gentleman hobbled across the room, and said, 'I perceive, sir, you're just arrived; though I have never had the pleasure of an introduction to you, would you allow me to enquire how things are going on?'

"'Going on?' I said, 'where?'

"'Why, at home, to be sure; I'm very sorry I could not stay longer than the first day to give you a helping hand. Have the rascally reformers any chance, do you think?'

"'I really can't say. I have not troubled myself much about politics; but I believe the Tory candidate had very little chance.'

"'Good God, sir! is that true? Then Exeter has eternally disgraced itself. When did you leave home, sir?'

"'Yesterday morning.'

"'You don't seem much disconcerted at our defeat, which is very unaccountable. I thought you were very much interested in the contest?'

"'Not the least. I promised my vote to the Reformers—but nothing more.'

"'Promised your vote to the Reformers!' exclaimed the old gentleman—'then, by the Lord, sir, your conduct was most unaccountable in sitting on the True Blue Committee—infamous behaviour; and, as I live, I will expose you!'

"Saying this, the old fellow hobbled off, leaving me overcome with amazement at his heat. However, I had the

table cleared, called for a pint of wine, and began to ruminate on subjects more interesting than blues and scarlets.

"'I have only an instant, sir, so pray excuse me,' said a middle-aged man wrapt up in a huge quantity of great-coats. 'How are you getting on?'

"'Oh, pretty well,' I replied, wondering what this new interrogator had to say to me.

"'Glad to hear it. Have you come to town on the business!'

"'What business?'

"'To secure the majority, to be sure. I know where you might have three or four coach loads of them at a moment's notice. They would go for five pounds and their expenses.'

"'Who would go?—where would they go to?'

"'Come, come,' said the stranger, 'I see you're a deep one. I certainly never spoke to you before—but I took to you from the first as a brother Radical.'

"'A Radical?' I said. 'I'm no Radical, I assure you.'

"'The devil you're not! then the more shame for you. Haven't I heard your speeches—haven't they been published on every wall in Brighton, and after all, have you the assurance to tell me you're not a Radical?'

"'I'm no Radical, sir—and never made speeches in my life.'

"'I see how it is—you're bought over, sir;—you're a time-serving, truckling turncoat, sir;—and I can assure you your infamous behaviour shall be known. There's not a man in Brighton but shall hiss you the moment you show your renegade face on the streets.—No Radical, indeed!'

"The man seemed nearly choked, partly with his passion, and partly with the enormous involutions of his cloaks, and hustled off, looking as proud and disdainful as a turkey-cock, before I had time to ask the scoundrel what he meant by his impertinence.

"I swallowed my wine as quickly as possible, in case of any more interruptions; and, having ordered a cab to the door, jumped into it, and made all the haste I could to Covent-Garden Theatre. The driver looked round the corner, from his outside box, at me several times, as we passed

the lamps. I fell back into the dark part of the vehicle, to indulge in my quiet thoughts undisturbed. As we pursued our way after leaving the main street, the man leant forward, and said—

"'Much business doing now, sir?'

"'I don't know.'

"'Vorse luck. I took to't myself once.'

"'Took to what? I don't understand you, fellow.'

"'O, ye don't hunderstand me, feller, doesn't ye? Vy, you knows vell enough as I was once in the same line as yourself.'

"'What line? You labour under some mistake. Drive on, or I'll leave your cabriolet.'

"'Vell, you've grown mighty big sin' I seed ye last, howsomdever. Me and Bill, ye see, was nabbed by that 'ere old bloody beak about that 'ere old cove's ticker at Brummondsey. Bill was scragged, d'ye see,—and I took a driving this here cab.'

"'Drive on, fellow, or I'll complain to the police.'

"'Come, come, there aint no manner o' use for to go hargufying in this here manner—but mum's the word—I would'nt never be the lad to peach, if so be as you're on the private lay.—Lord, Jem!' he cried, suddenly pulling up, 'here's your chance! Dash me if that there old gintleman bain't dreadful drunk, and never none arter him to see arter his cly.—Jump, Jem, you're the lad to clean him out.—Shall I wait and go halves?'

"'Let me out of your infernal carriage, you impudent rascal. I don't understand a word you say.—Here's a shilling.'

"'Thank ye for nothing,' said the man;—'that's a wery hunfriendly thing for you for to do.—I sees the seals as plain as ever I seed any thing—rale gold 'uns, by the hooky. If you'll only hold the reins, I'll have a grab at 'em myself.'

"I got out of the cab as quickly as possible, and hurried off, without attending to any more of the scoundrel's jargon.

"I took my place in a back seat of one of the boxes, attended most strenuously to the play, and without any farther adventure, found my way back to my hotel. As I sipt my

brandy-and-water, in the luxury of slippers and a fire, I perceived my two friends seated at different tables, and eyeing me with such an expression of disgust and abhorrence, that I felt tempted at first to call them to an account for their conduct; but second thoughts told me the wiser plan would be to take no notice of them; and accordingly I went off to bed, without letting them perceive that I was aware of their existence. Next morning I prepared for a busy day. In the first place, I resolved to call on old Mr Jones, the guardian of Miss Mervyn, to ask him to accompany me when I presented myself to his ward; then to execute as many of my commissions as I could; and, after that, to leave myself open for any invitation I might receive, either from the gentleman or the lady. I put my aunt's trinkets and my cousin's watch and rings into my pocket, resolved to call on the jeweller with them myself; and having ascertained my nearest way to Grosvenor Place, prepared to sally forth, and realise all my expectations at once. While the waiter was giving me the finishing brush, a military-looking gentleman, who had been observing me for some time, came up to me, and said, with a strong Irish accent, and a very insinuating smile—

"'Am I lucky enough to have met you so unexpectedly?'

"I bowed in answer to his pleasant address, and said—'I am sorry I can't remember having met you before.'

"'Indeed?' replied the gentleman; 'then it's the greater pleasure to have fallen in with you now.—You were perhaps not at the theatre last night?'

"'O yes, I was—a most admirable comedy.'

"'Comedy was it?—And can't you guess why I spake to you this morning?'

"'I can't indeed, unless that you have most likely mistaken me for some other gentleman.'

"'OTHER gentleman!' replied the stranger, still smiling; —'you surely don't pretend to call yourself a gentleman?'

"'Sir?'

"That's right, sir—out with it!—Bluster away for a minute or two!—It will have very little effect, I assure you, on Captain Terence O'Niel.'

"'I never heard of any such person; and I must say, I can't comprehend the meaning of your conduct.'

"'Why, the maning of it seems to me to be as plain as Howth. What have you done with the small bit of paper I put into your hand last night?'

"Paper!—in my hand!—What do you mean, sir?'

"'Just to tell you, that you're a most contemptible, cowardly scoundrel; and that I'll slip a bullet into your carcass, as sure as my name is O'Niel.'

"'If I were not certain that you speak under some unaccountable misapprehension, I should most undoubtedly take notice of your insulting language. To what do you allude?'

"'Yes, yes, all your stomach for fighting seems to be for fighting *shy*. Why, didn't you kick up a row in the box where I sat last night? Didn't you press yourself and a great painted faced female-woman close to the two ould ladies—young ladies I mane—I mane one ould lady and one young one—that I escorted to the playhouse? and didn't you take my card, and slip it into your pocket, without being so much of a Christian or a gentleman as to give me yours?'

"'Certainly not, sir,' I interrupted. 'You are mistaken in the person.'

"'If you'll allow me the pleasure of differing from you,' replied the gallant captain, 'I would say you are a shuffling liar; and I will horse-whip you with the greatest pleasure in life.'

"'You impertinent scoundrel!' I exclaimed, fairly put into a passion, 'I will kick you out of the universe if you don't make an ample apology.'

"'Now you spake like a raisonable man. Give me your card, and I'll sind a friend to converse with you in less than a couple of no-times.'

"I gave him my card as he requested; and with a very civil bow and a friendly smile, Captain Terence O'Niel walked 'jauntily' out of the coffee-room.

"I forgot to tell you that I had despatched Boots early in the morning with a note to Mr Jones, announcing my arrival in London, and my intention of calling on him between eleven and twelve o'clock. I now sat down in expectation of my

adversary's message, and wrote a note to the old gentleman, explaining the cause of breaking my engagement. I gave my note to Boots, with directions to be as expeditious as he could, and returned to my seat still boiling with indignation at the insults I had received from the bloodthirsty Irish captain.

"Whilst endeavouring to wile away the time by spelling for the third or fourth time through the advertisements of the Morning Herald, a very strong looking, bluff, red-faced man walked up to me, and said, 'Servant, sir.—What's the news?'

"I looked up from my paper, and, not being in the humour to stand any farther impertinence, replied, 'Deliver your message with the least possible delay: I know what you've come about.'

"'Oh, you do, do you?—Glad to hear it.—Then you'll do the thing quietly.'

"'Certainly; and also as soon as may be. Unfortunately, I have no one to act as my friend.'

"'Oh, it makes no hodds about that; Mr Obler is a wery good-natured gentleman. But if ye'r peticlar about that-ere, there's Mr Hookit, in Dyer's-alley, as gets many gentlemen in your situation clear off. He'll come for a trifle.'

"'Well,' I replied, astonished at the vulgarity of the captain's second, 'I don't know what to do on the occasion. I shall consult the only friend I have in London.'

"'Ah, do. Character's a great matter in them there consarns; but then, unfortunately, you're so uncommon well known.'

"'Quite the reverse, I assure you. But when must I appear?'

"'Why, to-morrow morning, at half a'ter nine.'

"'Where?'

"'In Bow street, to be sure. But you're sure to be remanded.—Come along, and we'll have the examination over in a jiffey.'

"'What examination do you mean?'

"'Oh, you'll hear in plenty of time.—You needn't say nothing to me; 'case, you see, I'm bound to report all you say to my principal.'

" ' And what the devil do I care for that? Your principal is a scoundrel; and I hope to be lucky enough to lodge a bullet in his brains.'

" ' Come, that *is* letting out. The cab's at the door—come.'

" ' I shan't budge a step. I will meet your principal according to his appointment; but I have business elsewhere, and wish none of his company just now.'

" ' I dare say you don't; but I have a couple of gentlemen at the door as will quicken your movements, I expects. You have worn the darbies before this, I guess.—The cabman has got his supeeny.'

" ' May I ask,' I cried, in a tempest of passion, ' what the devil you take me for?'

" ' Why, I takes you for petty larceny—for being too busy with your fingers last night at the theatre.'

" I was struck dumb with astonishment at the man's declaration. ' Do you know who I am, sir?' I exclaimed.

" ' I can't say I knows you myself—but the cabman swears he took you up here last night, and gave information again' you the moment he heard of the lady's loss.'

" ' I will clear up this in a moment,' I said; ' let me just write a note to a gentleman in Grosvenor Place.'

" ' By all means; I never hurries no man as behaves like a gentleman. We charges a guinea a quarter of an hour.'

" ' You shall have it.' I wrote a second letter to Mr Jones, informing him of my new calamity, and begging his presence in Bow street as quickly as possible. The two gentlemen who had addressed me the day before were in corners of the room. I went up to the old man who had accused me of sitting on the True Blue Candidates' Committee, and said—' You saw me here last night, sir. I am now accused of picking pockets, or some such thing; do you think it possible, sir, that a man of my ap'——

" ' Sir,' replied the old gentleman, ' I beg you will not apply for my opinion. You yourself confessed with your own lips you were a Whig. I have nothing more to say. After such a declaration as that, I should be inclined to think the accusation as likely to be just as not.'

"Disgusted with the bigotry of the old blockhead, I turned to the opposite corner, where the other gentleman was busy over his breakfast—'Sir,' I said, 'from being mistaken for some other individual, I am accused of having committed a theft at the theatre last night.'

"'Very glad to hear it,' replied the man; 'how we *shall* rejoice at it in Brighton. That comes of selling yourself to the Tories. We shan't be troubled with you for fourteen years I hope—so that we are quit of you for *two* elections, at all events.'

"I now lost all command of my temper, and assured both gentlemen, that the moment I had explained the ridiculous mistake, I should most assuredly cudgel them both to death. I now hurried as quickly as possible out of the house, followed closely by the officer, and jumped into a cab that was drawn up to the door. When we stopt at Bow street, the driver of the vehicle leered round the side at me with a most diabolical grin.

"'Vell, Jim,' he said, 'you von't be so mighty big next time, I 'opes.' I recognised the ruffian who had driven me the evening before, and whose gibberish and impertinence had forced me to leave his conveyance.

"Two surly-looking gentlemen were seated, with an amazing air of city dignity, on the bench.

"'Sorry to find you here again, prisoner,' said the younger of the magistrates: 'it is not above half a year since we prescribed a dose of Horsemonger.'

"I looked at the man as he said this, expecting that his remark was addressed to some other individual in the court. His huge grey gooseberry eyes were fixed unmistakeably on me, and what with the ferment of my spirits, and the disagreeable incidents that had pestered me ever since my arrival in London, I was nearly bursting with rage and indignation.

"'What do you mean,' I cried, 'you scowling ruffian, by pretending to recognise me as a malefactor?'

"'Put irons on the prisoner's wrists,' calmly replied the magistrate, 'and keep him from any actual violence; his insolence of tongue we shall find another method of curing.'

"The elder dignitary here broke in. 'I advise you, young man, to be more respectful to your judges. I myself have an impression of having very lately sent you to the treadmill; but a person in my situation sees so many scoundrels in the course of a day, that it is impossible to remember one villanous physiognomy more than another.'

"'Are you, too, in the plot against me, you foul-tongued Pharisee?' I exclaimed; 'I give you notice, you shall answer for this the moment I am at liberty.'

"'Take down his words,' said the junior magistrate; 'the dignity of this bench shall not be so insufferably outraged while I have the honour of a seat on it.'

"In the mean time, my former friend, who had conducted me to the office, was busily employed in putting manacles on my wrists, and whispered, 'Huffing the queer cove won't do —try t'other lay; you'll may be get off for three months and a flogging.' I scowled at the man as he said this, and by my muttered threats of vengeance converted him from a sort of well-wisher into an enemy.

"The magistrates proceeded in the business. It appeared that a lady had been robbed at the theatre. A hue and cry was raised—and the cabman, who had conveyed me nearly to the theatre, immediately declared that he had taken the notorious Jem Wrencher on his way to the play; that he knew in a moment that Jem was after some spoil, as he was disguised like a gentleman, and lodged at Hatchett's—and that he had not the least doubt that Jem was the thief. He was called up for his evidence.

"'Do you know this man—the prisoner at the bar?' said the magistrate.

"'Yes; I knows him well. His name is Jem Wrencher; but ve alvays calls him Jemmy the Jewel, for shortness.'

"'And you took him last night to Covent Garden?'

"'Yes; but he left me before ve got out of Long Acre, 'cause he see'd an old gentleman as was intosticate, and he vanted to have a grab at his vatch and danglers.'

"'Did he tell you that such was his intention when he left the cab?'

"'He! Lord bless ye, no, sir. Jem's as close as vax; he

never tells nobody of vat he's arter—for he says, says he, no 'complice, no split, says he.'

"'Prisoner, you must give an account of yourself. What is your name?' said his worship.

"'Fyshe.'

"'Come, sir, none of your vulgar ribaldry here. We shall fish it out, depend upon it. Again I ask you, by what name you wish to be examined?'

"'Fyshe, I tell you, sir; my name is John Fyshe, of Notting-hall, in the county palatine of Durham.'

"'Oh, very well, put down his name. Now answer me—Where were you yesterday, between the hours of nine and half-past eleven?'

"'At Covent Garden theatre.'

"'Write that down.—In the boxes?'

"'Yes.'

"'Now, prisoner, mark me; I advise you seriously to say nothing that may criminate yourself, but answer me this moment, as you hope to escape the severest penalties upon crime, both in this life and the next—did you not rob a lady of her jewels?'

"'You insulting scoundrel,' I began, but was stopt by a friendly nudge from the officer at my side.

"'No nonsense, sir. He doesn't deny the fact. Write down that he confesses'——

"'Write no such thing,' I exclaimed. 'I confess no lie of the sort.'

"'The old magistrate here interfered, and said to one of the myrmidons of the office—'Search the prisoner.' In an instant, the expert hands of the officer had rummaged every pocket of my dress; and a glittering heap of rings, bracelets, and necklaces, were laid on the table, before the glistening eyes of the now delighted magistrates. These, you'll remember, were the trinkets of my aunt and cousin.

"The magistrate, as he took up each article carefully, looked to a written inventory which he held in his hand, and laid them down again with an unsatisfied shake of the head. At last, when my cousin's watch was taken out of its box and examined, he jumped up evidently highly pleased, and said

—'There needs no farther confirmation. This is the watch described in this paper—there can be no doubt on that point. The cipher of H. M. is quite conclusive. Remand him till this day week, when Miss Mervyn will come forward and identify.'

"'Miss Mervyn!' I exclaimed—'is *she* the lady I robbed?'

"'Stop a moment!' exclaimed his worship. 'Put down that exclamation—he confesses he robbed a lady, only that he didn't know her name.'

"At this juncture, a gentleman I had never seen before stepped forward and said—'Please your worship, there is surely some mistake here. I was sent by a friend to wait on this individual with a hostile message. I found on arriving at Hatchett's he had been carried to this office, and feel quite astonished at what I have heard. My friend called him out for insulting and rude behaviour to a Mrs Paterson and her ward, Miss Mervyn'——

"'The same lady, sir,' said the magistrate, 'who was afterwards pillaged?'

"'The same. My friend thought him guilty only of impertinence. Of course, he could never have thought of demanding satisfaction from a thief.'

"I was perfectly overpowered, as you may suppose, with such a concurrence of events, and made no reply. The gentleman indignantly tore the letter he had undertaken to deliver to me, and uttering a fervent prayer for my speedy arrival at the gallows, he left the judgment-hall. Just as they were making out my committal, my friend, Mr Jones, came puffing into the room. Luckily he was acquainted with their worships—and after shaking me by the hand, deposed that he knew me to be a man of independent fortune, and pledged his life I could not be the perpetrator of the robbery. Things were now easily explained. The cipher of my cousin Hannah Meynell accounted for the H. M. upon the watch; the other things were accounted for by a mistake on the part of the cabriolet driver, and after an awkward sort of apology from their worships, I was very glad to take Mr Jones's arm and find my way into the street. My first impulse was of course to go and right myself in the eyes of the beautiful Miss Mer-

vyn. Old Jones had some business which he said would detain him about an hour, but at the end of that time he promised to join me at her house. I went and was ushered up stairs. On entering the room, the first object which presented itself to me was the gallant Captain Terence O'Niel, seated beside a good-looking sort of dumpy little girl on the sofa. The moment he saw me he started up, looking as fierce as a tiger.—'What is the meaning of this intrusion here, you scoundrel? has Major Hopkins not delivered my note to you?'

"The lady screamed at this address; and an old person, who I concluded was the *gouvernante*, coming forward, begged us both to be quiet. I explained matters as rapidly as I could. But in truth, by this time, I was heartily sick of the great city and all the miseries I had encountered in it; and now that I had fairly seen the lady of Elmdale manor, and the very sweet smiles she favoured the gallant O'Niel with, I was not very anxious as to whether they thought me a pickpocket or not. However, both the ladies expressed the greatest wonder at the captain's mistaking me for the person who had behaved rudely to them in the box. In a short time Mr Jones made his appearance,—and a few minutes saw us both fairly in the street again.

"'Elmdale manor, Mr Fyshe, is certainly a beautiful farm.'

"'Pretty place,' I replied.

"''Twould make a sweet addition to Notting-hall.

"'Tolerable—if it were not encumbered.'

"'Encumbered?—there is not a debt on it.'

"'No, but there's a young lady,' said I very dryly—'and an Irish captain. I am off home again by the evening coach. I wouldn't stay another day in this infernal town, to be made King of England.'

"'Then, Mr Fyshe,' said old Jones, withdrawing his arm, and looking very distant and dignified, 'I have been mistaken in you.'

"'So have a deuced lot of people,' I replied—'I sometimes doubt whether I am myself or not. After this I will stay among people who have known me all my days, and who won't take me for a thief or a politician;'—and, in truth, gentlemen, I was as good as my word,—that evening saw

me on my way to Durham, with all my commissions unexecuted. My aunt was some days before she forgave me my negligence, but Cousin Hannah pardoned me very soon, and, in proof of it, in about three months from that time she consoled me for the loss of Oulsley farm and Elmdale manor by giving me herself."

"That's what I call the best of it, and *no* mistake," said old Hixie, who, to all outward appearance, had been profoundly asleep all the time of Mr Fyshe's story—"but, gentlemen, if you'll give me leave, I'll tell you an anecdote which I think none of you have heard. A soldier's duty, gentlemen, ought to overrule all other considerations. Friendship, happiness, love itself, ought to yield when put in comparison with duty. When I entered the army, it is now several years ago, a young fellow"——

"Poh! that's the story of John Taylor and the beautiful Portuguese"—said the officer who sat opposite the garrulous quartermaster.

"And how, in the name of wonder, did you know?" said old Hixie, thrown on his haunches.

"Why, you told it two or three nights ago, and you have let us have it, with additions and corrections, twice a-week, on an average, ever since I joined."

"Well," replied the quartermaster, joining in the laugh,—"tell us a better, that's all; for my own part I think a good thing can't come too often—so I'll thank you not to detain the bottle."

CHAPTER IX.

THE individual thus addressed hemmed three times, preparatory to the commencement of his story; but before he had got any farther, a young gentleman, who had been laughing immoderately for a long time at the absurd appearance of the gallant Hixie, broke out—"For Heaven's sake! let us have the story of the Fair Portuguese, Mr Quartermaster."

Hixie, at this speech, sat bolt upright on his chair, looked with a dignified expression of tipsy gravity on the person who addressed him, and said—"Meaning me, sir?—Good-nature has its limits; and though I allow our own lads to call me quartermaster, or any other thing they choose, I hold it redogatory—degoratory I mean—to the dignity of a gentleman holding his Majesty's commission for to submit to a lower cognomination than that to which he is justly entitled."

"I assure you," replied the other, "that if I have done any thing to offend you, it is in total ignorance of military etiquette. I scarcely know the difference between a field-marshal and a serjeant. I have the misfortune to be a civilian."

"Ah! if that's the case, give me your hand, young gentleman—old Hixie's not the man to cherish malice—so, if you'll come to my quarters to-night, you shall have the fair Portuguese, and also my sea voyage to the Cape, not to mention a glass of grog and a segar; for, between ourselves, I am strongly inclined to be of opinion, that the tongue of a man is liker a mill than any thing in the world; for you see, young gentleman, if by any chance the stream runs dry, what does the mill say to the water? The mill says to the water, says the mill,—'No drink no clapper;' and just in the same way says my tongue to the brandy bottle—says it"——

"Poh! we all know what you do with your tongue: so, for any sake, Hixie, dear, give it a holyday; for here has Harry Phipps been sending a detachment of hems forward to pioneer the way for his story, and the road has been cleared this half-hour."

Mr Phipps took advantage of the pause, and struck in before Hixie had got his mouth empty enough to reply.

"I don't know, after all, that I have any story to tell. I have never myself met with any adventure worth relating; and I have not, I am sorry to say, the art of some people in reversing the old fable, and making mice bring forth mountains. A lesson or two more from the quartermaster will perhaps enable me to discover that I have led a most adventurous life; but, till then, I must remain content with letting other people be the heroes of my stories.

"Before I got my commission, I was, of course, full of enthusiasm about honour and glory, long spurs, and red coats, as all young soldiers ought to be. I lost no opportunity of becoming acquainted with those who had seen service, and the title of captain or major sounded nobler in my ears than duke or marquis. I lived in a midland county; the neighbourhood was quiet and retired, and I had already exhausted all the military information of the two or three families which composed the society of our village. My principal friend was an old man, the surgeon, who had been—as he told me four or five times a-day—in an elevated position on the medical staff of the ——shire regiment of militia, commanded by that brave and distinguished officer, Sir Theophilus Snooks, the great stockbroker and banker. The gallant lieutenant-colonel seemed, by Mr Benjamin Lister's account (this was the surgeon's name), to have been a most scientific tactician. His account of a sham-fight, where the regiment got entangled among the carriages of the spectators, and at last was completely broken and dispersed in a vain effort to defile double-quick time between the stalls of the apple-women on the ground, was one of the most stirring descriptions of a battle-field I had ever listened to. But the same stories, and the same descriptions, every day repeated, at last became rather tiresome; and I was rejoiced beyond measure, one day, when Mr Lister came up to me with a look of vast importance, and said, 'Only think, Mr Harry, the Symmonds's cottage is let at last.'

"'Indeed! who's the tenant?'

"'Why, you'll perceive, Mr Harry, that it would perhaps

be premature to express all my suspicions—indeed, caution is one of the chief requisites of a gentleman in the medical profession, as my old tutor, Dr Hummums, used to say in his lectures on the *materia medica*. The doctor used to say—a very good speech I think it was—he used to say,—Gentlemen, I only give you this piece of advice: Think twice before you speak, and don't speak then, if you can help it.'

"'Well! but what has the *materia medica* to do with Symmonds's cottage? who has taken it?'

"'A gentleman. His boxes are arrived at the White Horse: I saw the direction by mere accident of course; for, as old Dr Hummums used to say in his lectures—said he—Medical men, said he, should not be inquisitive. I was just thinking over the good old man's advice, as I was talking to the landlady. Some packages were lying in the passage. I happened accidentally to turn up the direction-cards with my cane, and helped Mrs Morris to read a letter she had received from the owner of them. His name is Captain William Horatio Ryder: he has taken the cottage for three months, takes possession of it to-morrow, and that is all the information I have yet been able to collect.'

"My friend Mr Lister, you'll perceive, like a great many other people, first laid down a general proposition, and then broke it, as if he had acquired a perfect right to pry and blab, by expressing a prodigious abhorrence of curiosity and tittle-tattle.

"The captain came, and as he was the first *bona fide* captain I had yet been acquainted with, you may imagine how zealously I cultivated his friendship. He was a man about twenty-nine years of age; well informed, and communicative, with an air at the same time of melancholy and abstraction that puzzled me very much to account for. My friend the surgeon was no less non-plussed than myself. For a man in the prime of life, with every apparent comfort round him, to be so oppressed with low spirits, was a circumstance that set the uninquisitive pupil of the sententious Dr Hummums nearly distracted. He pryed and chattered incessantly, and redoubled his professions of veneration for the dicta of his ancient master; but Captain Ryder's silence on all matters

of his personal history, was a stronger defence against impertinent curiosity than the precepts of the professor. My father, who was the clergyman of the village, called on him, and was pleased with his conversation; he became a constant visitor at the parsonage—and as he joined in all the little parties that were going on in our neighbourhood, we were in hopes that his melancholy would wear off in time. But in this we were disappointed. He and I had by this time become as intimate as a lad of sixteen or seventeen could be with a staid sober gentleman of twenty-nine. We walked and fished together, and on all subjects, save those connected with his personal adventures, he was open and unrestrained. One day, when I had breakfasted with him, we were making preparations for a fishing expedition up the water, when Mr Lister was announced. I don't think the captain took to my friend the surgeon from the first, but the old man was in reality so friendly and good-hearted, that those who knew him readily forgave the little weaknesses in his character.

"'Captain Ryder, your most obedient: Master Harry, your humble cum stumble,' said the Esculapian, on entering the room—'Heard the news, eh?'

"'News?' said Captain Ryder—'I didn't know they grew here.'

"'Grow! my dear sir,' replied the-matter-of-fact Mr Lister, who, if he was slow at apprehending a joke at all times, was doubly so from such an unexpected quarter as the hypochondriacal captain. 'News don't grow—they don't belong to either of the three kingdoms.'

"'Then it must be foreign intelligence; so do let us have it,' said I, 'for we are off for the weirs, and are pushed for time.'

"'Ah, always in a hurry, Master Harry; as that illustrious and gallant officer, Sir Theophilus, used to say, the more haste the worse speed, said he—ah, brave man, splendid commander. I had the honour, Captain Ryder, to hold a high situation on the medical staff of the'——

"'The news, my dear sir, the news,' I interrupted.

"'Softly, my young friend, softly; I thought you must

have heard them. The report's all over the village already—the tally-hò hounds meet on our green to-morrow. Now, I've been thinking, Captain Ryder, that a spanking gallop after the fox will do you more good than fishing, or any other sort of exercise. I've as pretty a prad in my stable—rather too high-spirited for my riding—he is perfectly at your service, and a hard day will do you both good—he backs a little at timber, but at a ditch he's delicious.'

"'Friendlier offer than this no man could make, and I was astonished at the coldness of the captain's manner in refusing a day's hunting, and on the horse of a friend too—he became gloomier and more moodily silent than I had ever seen him, and the poor medico shortly after took his leave, somewhat discomfited by the manner in which his courtesy had been received. After he left us, Ryder's dejection seemed evidently to increase; he gave up his intention of fishing, and as I saw that even my company was a restraint on him, I shortly after shouldered my rod, and proceeded to the weirs alone. I must confess I thought more about my melancholy friend than my tackle—'What could there be in a fox-chase that affected his spirits so grievously? Was he offended with old Lister for offering him a mount?' But as all the queries a man proposes to himself generally end with very unsatisfactory answers, I tried to banish him from my thoughts, and after an hour or two's tolerable sport, got home in time for dinner. A note was lying for me from Ryder, begging me to go down and share his mutton chop; so off I started, and cheered myself with the anticipation that something or other would drop out in the course of a whole evening's *tête-à-tête*, that would throw some light on the causes of his mysterious depression.

"'The dinner passed off as usual, but when we had filled our first bumper to the King, he said to me, 'You must have thought my conduct very odd in refusing old Lister's obliging offer of his horse, but I have no doubt you will think the reason of my refusal still more extraordinary.'

"'Oh, many men,' I said, 'have a sort of scruple in mounting a friend's horse to follow hounds.'

"'It isn't that.—So, my good fellow, I may just as well

tell you the whole story once for all—I know you won't blab it, like our Pythagorean friend, the disciple of Dr Hummums, and you will not wonder any longer at the dulness of my spirits, when you know what cause I have for sorrow.' He sighed as he said this, and finished his bumper.

"I followed his example in the latter of these operations, and prepared as sober a countenance as I could to listen to a tale of wo.

"'I have so few relations,' said Captain Ryder, 'that when I was left an orphan at three or four years of age, the person nearest to me in blood was an aunt of my mother's. To the charge of this old lady I was committed; and though I have to thank her for kindness more, I may say, than maternal, yet to her I owe all the unhappiness I have hitherto experienced. She was one of those unceasingly fidgety people who never leave one alone. From the time she taught me my letters she thought it was her imperative duty to superintend every other part of my education. She endeavoured to form my feelings exactly after the model of her own; and, in fact, she so perfectly succeeded, that I am ashamed to confess to you, at the age of fifteen I had no thoughts, no wishes, no prejudices even, save those of my venerable grand-aunt. It has taken me nearly ever since to get quit of the effects of such a preposterous education; but even now I find it impossible to shake off my earliest habits of thought; and though outwardly I am always mistaken for Captain Ryder, my conscience tells me I am a hypocrite all the time, for in reality I am nothing more nor less than old aunt Anne. She had had her sorrows in her youth, and, according to the system she followed in all other things, she inoculated me with a sort of personal participation in her misfortunes. Some time shortly after the Flood she had been in love with some gallant cavalier; and though there was something very ridiculous in the idea of an individual so old and withered as my preceptress having ever been a slave to the tender passion, her policy was too successful in impressing me with a vigorous resolution to avoid, if possible, the catastrophe which had ruined her hopes. The object of her attachment had been, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter in

his day, and unfortunately broke his neck in leaping over a wall. A fox-chase, in my aunt's estimation, after that event, was only a cloak for suicide and murder, a horse a more deadly scourge than pestilence or famine. The utmost effort of her courage only enabled her to trust me in a carriage, and her anathemas were so forcible, and her descriptions of the unavoidableness of sudden death the moment I pressed the saddle so convincing, that I fairly confess to you that at your age, Master Harry, I would much more willingly have stormed a battery than put my foot into the stirrup. My aunt, however, died. I found myself by her kindness richer than I required; and, after a decent time devoted to grief for the loss of so excellent a benefactress, I began to feel the unpleasant effects of the mode in which she had brought me up. I found, on enquiring into my own mind, that I did not want for spirit; but the solitary life I had led, and the feelings I had imbibed, I was aware unfitted me for the duties of the station in life in which I found myself placed. I resolved, therefore, as the best school for acquiring all the manliness and liberality of sentiment, and knowledge at the same time of men and manners, which I so earnestly desired, to enter the army. A commission was speedily procured. I became popular with my companions, by openly and at all times confessing my inferiority in what is called knowingness, but professing at the same time my readiness to be taught; and in this way a very short time enabled me to bet upon races, pigeon-matches, and other things of that description, and lose my money with the good-nature of a gentleman, and the facility of a spoon—two good qualities, which are certain, when they are combined, to render any one the delight of his mess. My reverence for my aunt's injunctions insensibly decayed; my fears of the objects she had painted in such terrible colours gradually disappeared; and I even worked myself up to such a state of desperate resolution, that having listened one night to an animated conversation, and being rather heated with wine, I promised to join a party of our officers who were going out with the hounds next morning. If it was folly to make the promise, you will say it was madness to fulfil it. But I was resolved to set my life upon the

hazard of a die, and get over my secret fears by one first and desperate effort. The horse I rode was one of those beautiful paced, cantering, easy creatures, that I had often looked upon with a sort of desire to try if I couldn't enjoy the apparently delightful motion. I was in raptures with myself as I floated beautifully to the cover-side; and as I had by this time banished all fear, and had even made up my mind to a fall, I began to enjoy the exhilerating scene. My horse seemed to enter rather too powerfully into my feelings of enjoyment. The prancing of so many gallant steeds, the sounding of horns, and voices of the dogs, put the beautiful creature on his mettle. However, I managed, by letting him do exactly as he liked, to keep my seat, to my own most profound admiration. At last came a prodigious burst: hounds and horsemen started off with a dash through the brushwood of the cover. The fox had stolen away, and the whole field hurried as if for life and death. My horse grew perfectly insane; in a moment he was flashing among a crowd of men; passed them, with the bit strongly held between his teeth; then, in that phantasmagoria-like vision, I saw a vast multitude of hounds, and heard the howling of some of them that were crushed beneath his hoofs. Suddenly other sounds rang in my ears—they were those of hooting and hallooing, cursing and swearing, mingled with threats of the most appalling atrocity. "Shoot the villain! murder the rascal! horsewhip the tailor!"—and fast and furious as was my pace, I soon heard the trampling of unnumbered horses behind me; the sound of galloping feet came nearer and nearer, the storm of execrations became louder and louder, in which, in the enthusiasm of the moment, I vociferously joined, and spurred my already nearly flying charger, unmindful of the yelping of the half-dozen dogs we overturned at every step. Whilst scouring along like the wind, and wondering in my amazing ignorance where the deuce the fox could be—for by this time I had headed the hounds—the voices of the horsemen behind me still sounded in my ears; the breathing of their horses was close to me, when—heaven and earth! how shall I express the agonies of my rage and astonishment—I felt five or six enormous hunting-whips most vigorously applied to my

shoulders. "Tailor! scoundrel! villain!" was the accompaniment of every blow—"*that* will teach you to kill poor Rover; *there's* for Trusty! *there's* for Juniper!" All this time I felt it impossible to pull up my horse, which now exerted itself with an increase of speed. My persecutors were shortly left behind; over hedge, ditch, and stile, my steed and I still continued our course; the voice of the pack died off in the distance, and I found myself pursuing my career through peaceful fields and undisturbed meadows, where every now and then a startled countryman shouted out some strange exclamation of alarm or surprise. Half maddened with pain and indignation, and anxious to have an opportunity of revenging myself on my cowardly assailants, I was rejoiced when my career came to an end by the noble animal floundering into a ditch, and finding itself totally unable to rise. I left it to its fate, and getting into a chaise at the first town I came to, I returned to quarters. Here, of course, rumour with her hundred tongues had been busy with my adventure. Even my companions who had tempted me to the hunt, did not give the most favourable colouring to my conduct in the field. They hinted that my unprovoked cruelty in riding over the hounds met with no more than its fitting reward from the application of the horsewhip. Unfortunately it was a subscription pack, or my first business would have been to have shot the owner. I found it was impossible to discover who the persons were who had assaulted me, and all my enquiries only led me to the conclusion, that the attack had been made on my person at the unanimous desire of every sportsman on the ground. The actual performers were grooms and whippers-in—I could, of course, demand no satisfaction from fellows like them, and resolved accordingly to challenge the whole hunt. By the advice, however, of my friends, I contented myself with sending a message to the master of the hounds, an old bluff-faced country squire; and after stating to him that I understood he had given encouragement to the infamous scoundrels who had so grossly insulted me, I concluded by making him responsible for their behaviour, and accordingly requested him to name his time and place. His answer was in these words, as near as I remember:—

" ' It wasn't half enough—I wish to God I could have got near enough to you, and I would most assuredly have broken every bone in your skin. You have killed my three best hounds, and lamed seven others; and as to the satisfaction you want, you must go and ask it from Bill Snaffle, our whipper-in. As to your nonsense about pistols and all that, it's all my eye and my elbow—you don't think I'm such an ass as to put a bullet in your head just now, and then have to go and earth myself in France, or such like foreign parts, all the best of the hunting season, till I surrender at the summer 'sizes? No, young gentleman. So, all I can say is, if you choose to ride over my hounds, you must stand the consequences—that's all. So no more from your servant, John Brushton.'

" ' The end of the adventure was, that I took the earliest opportunity of effecting an exchange. The regiment I joined was under sailing orders for Malta, and I was delighted at the thought of leaving England and all its disagreeable associations behind me. Suddenly our departure was countermanded, and, to my horror and chagrin, I found myself stationed at a large depôt, about fifteen or twenty miles from my own estate. The view of the neighbourhood recalled very unpleasant recollections; and among the other feelings that were awakened by the well-known scenes, was a very overwhelming one, I am sorry to say, of hatred to the memory of old aunt Anne. But however her mode of education had lowered me in my own eyes, the wealth which she was known to have left me made me no inconsiderable object in the eyes of others. I was fêted and feasted by every family in the neighbourhood, any of whose olive branches were of the feminine gender. With the usual waywardness of spoilt children, I found myself more pleased with those who comparatively neglected me, than with those who actually lavished their kindness and attentions. The family which pleased me most was that of a widow lady of the name of ——. Why should I still feel a delicacy in giving utterance to the one loved name? Alas! they are now nothing to me, and I fear I am less than nothing to them. Their name was Marsham. A son and daughter were the

whole of the family; the son, a fine high-spirited lad, a few years younger than I was, and the daughter about seventeen. The great charm about Gertrude Marsham was her perfect gentleness. I never saw a creature so meek, so soft, and, in short, so captivating in all her ways. She was not beautiful —scarcely, to superficial eyes, pretty; but in my eyes, Master Harry, I must confess she was all that my most romantic dreams had fancied of femininity (if there is such a word) and grace. Ere many months were past, I was almost considered one of themselves; and to my intercourse with that family I attribute, in a great measure, my having corrected the faults of my disposition, which had been either implanted in me, or strengthened by the injudicious education of my early years. Without ever having come to any declaration, I found that I was considered by others, and when I examined into the matter, even by myself, in the light of an engaged man. I couldn't help fancying that this was the light in which I was viewed by Mrs Marsham; and vanity led me to suppose that Gertrude herself thought of me as something very different from a common acquaintance. This went on for some time. I was then two-and-twenty; and though my income was considerable, I had scarcely enough, as the phrase is, to marry on, as my aunt had tied up the estate till I should attain the rather unusual majority of twenty-three. Here, again, I have to attribute my misfortune to the absurdity of my relation. The Marshams were well aware of my circumstances, and indeed in that circle of sincere friends and kind advisers I had no secret (save one) to conceal. That secret was what I ought to have told long before. If I had only had the sense to make my proposal to Gertrude, the incident might not perhaps have occurred which blasted all my hopes, and sent me melancholy and despairing through the world. Again my ill fortune pursued me in the shape of a horse. Troy was not more certainly doomed to destruction by the agency of that detestable animal than I was. Since my misfortune in the hunting-field I had been so miserably dejected in mind the moment I thought of a saddle, that I had abstained if possible from the very mention of a stable. To be sure I sported

a handsome phaeton, and, by dint of some lessons from my servant, had learned to drive my pair of chestnuts without any apparent difficulty. One day, however, on paying my usual visit to the Marshams, I was told with the greatest exultation that Gertrude had been presented by some relation with a very beautiful lady's palfrey—and, moreover, that she was impatient to give her new acquisition a trial. Alfred, her brother, was from home, and Gertrude looked at me with such imploring eyes, that, spite of my almost prophetic anticipations of misfortune, I could not avoid offering to be her escort in the park. The only steed except the carriage horses which was fit for me was a very pretty little bay, which was usually ridden by the groom when any of the family rode out. He seemed so gentle and quiet, that I began to have hopes that nothing would occur to interrupt the pleasure of our ride. Gertrude's palfrey was a very gentle, beautiful creature, and off we set at a slow walk beneath the trees of the avenue, and diverged in a few minutes among "the bosky bournes and bushy dells," with which the small but picturesque park abounded. Our conversation was delightful—but unfortunately it was most disagreeably interrupted by the servile habits of my horse. His place had been so uniformly in the rear, that he required constant attention to keep him alongside of my companion. Unfortunately, too, her horse was rather too high spirited for so light a hand upon his rein, and his mettle seemed to be infinitely more excited when he heard the trampling of my horse behind him. But all my efforts to maintain his place were of no avail. When Miss Marsham put her pony into a canter, no power which I could exert would induce my charger to desert his position in the rear. Tramp, tramp, tramp, a sharp, short trot sounded on the elastic turf, and irritated my beautiful companion's palfrey into madness. She at last began to lose her courage, and cried to me to come on, but I found it impossible to obey. At last she finally lost command of her horse, which set off full speed, over dells and hillocks, and among trees, which threatened every moment to dash poor Gertrude in pieces. Meanwhile my provoking brute kept just at such a distance behind as to add fresh spirit

to the race. At last, as we were approaching the house, I made one vigorous effort to get in advance, and stop our dangerous career, and applied my switch; but with a prodigious spring, which threw me off my balance, it dashed forward like lightning, and passed close to the now almost exhausted girl. At that moment I was just tumbling to the ground, and in the instinct of self-preservation, caught hold of something to save me. I need not tell you it was the arm of the unfortunate Gertrude. By some sudden swerve of my horse, I recovered my balance on the saddle, and in a moment was in the presence of Mrs Marsham, who having seen the pace we were going at, had rushed to the door, and was now hurrying distractedly along the avenue. My horse, as if recognising his mistress, stopped as she came near, and the cessation of his pace gave me an opportunity of hearing her exclaim as she passed, "Murderer! what have you done?" In an instant I had dismounted, and, on running back, saw Mrs Marsham supporting in her arms the fainting and bleeding form of her daughter. A century of agony was concentrated in that moment. I went forward, but was impatiently waved away by the broken-hearted parent—"Off, off! let us see you no more."—Five years have passed away since that agonising moment, but the whole scene comes vividly before me in my dreams. Even in my waking thoughts, that pale-faced girl, with closed eyes, and hair flying in wild confusion over her neck and shoulders, is never long absent from my mind. I have never spoken to her since that maddening hour, for the idea which had possessed her mother, that I had intentionally dragged her to the ground, after endangering her life by irritating the temper of her horse, was so strong, and, as I found, after many unavailing efforts, so unconquerable, that I thought it better for all parties to retire from the scene of my disaster at once, and rid them of the presence of a being who must always be the origin of such disagreeable recollections. Gertrude was, luckily, only slightly hurt. Alfred, on being acquainted with the circumstance, adopted his mother's view of the nature of my behaviour, and I was under the disagreeable necessity of giving him satisfaction for having made an attempt, as he expressed

it, on his sister's life,—a life which, it is no exaggeration to declare, was dearer to me than my own.'

"Thus far had my friend Captain Ryder proceeded with his story," continued young Phipps, "when he stopped suddenly short, fixed his severe penetrating eyes upon me, and said—

"'By heavens, sir, I don't understand your behaviour—you are absolutely laughing at my distress.'

"I was, in fact, taking a sly grin, for the reason which I will tell you afterwards; but, in the mean time, I begged his pardon, and requested him to continue his story.

"'Why, after that,' he went on, 'life was quite indifferent to me. I again effected an exchange, and passed three or four years in Canada very agreeably—that is, as quietly as possible, and with as few objects around me as I could any where hope for, to recall the miseries I had gone through. I devoted myself, by way of diverting my thoughts into other channels, to the studies connected with my profession, till, by an unlucky piece of good fortune, I found myself compelled to retire from service altogether. Our colonel was home on leave of absence; and at the time of my being senior captain, the major commanding was killed by a fall from his horse. My companions loudly congratulated me on my good luck, and one of them facetiously remarked, that in gratitude for my promotion, the least I could do was to buy the good-natured animal that had procured it for me. My misfortunes had always hitherto arisen from trusting myself on horseback; and it was from no cowardly feeling of regard to my personal safety, but a deep-rooted conviction of the sinfulness of again tempting Providence, by committing a similar indiscretion, that I invalided, came home, and left the majority to the next on the list. Since that I have sold my commission, travelled a year or two on the Continent, and having heard of this cottage, I resolved to occupy it for a short time, for I have never yet had courage to go to my own house; it is too close to the scene of my greatest happiness, and my acutest misery.'

"'You mean Marsham Hall?' I said, when he was silent.

"'To be sure I do,' replied Captain Ryder. 'But how do you happen to know the name?'

"'Why, my dear fellow,' I said, 'your friend Mrs Marsham is a sister of my father. We have all of us often heard the story, though rather differently told; but my father, without knowing the hero of the tale, has all along supported Gertrude's version, which fully acquits you of all intentional malice.'

"'Does Gertrude say so? Do you know her?' exclaimed Ryder, in a paroxysm of astonishment.

"'Gertrude Marsham,' I replied, 'is my first cousin—the kindest friend I have in the world, and, what is more, she is coming next week on a visit to the parsonage for three months.'

"But I perceive, gentlemen," continued Mr Phipps, "it is useless to go on. At the end of her visit at my father's, the whole village was clothed in white raiment—the church bells rang as they had never rung before, and my good friend Mr Benjamin Lister declared, and of his declarations made no end, that it was the jolliest wedding he had ever seen. Even the memory of Hummums was for a season cast aside, and he pryed into all the particulars of the match without any reservation in favour of a want of curiosity, and told all the information he had collected, without a single word in favour of keeping secrets."

Here ended young Phipps' narrative; and we were luckily advanced to such a stage, that we should have considered it a capital story, if it had been a hundred times stupider than it was. Shortly after that we separated for the night, and I began not to be very sorry that the next day was to be the last one of my visit—for I perceived it was impossible to go at such a tremendous pace, without pulling up to bait.

CHAPTER X.

The trumpet would be a fine subject for an epic poem;—the inspiring blast sending heroes forward to battle,—the hideous din of contest, pierced by the high resounding music ordering an advance,—the rally,—the retreat,—the triumph. Some of these odd days, when I have nothing better to do, I will sing its praises in twelve glorious cantos myself. But perhaps the most intensely exciting of its various intonations is about six o'clock on a keen clear day in August or September, when its splendid aërial notes are heard thrilling throughout the barrack-yard with a call to dinner. There is something finer in that than any other piece of music I am acquainted with, and a readier obedience is rendered to it than to any of its other imperious commands. The dinner-hour on this day found a large company of us assembled round a magnificently furnished board. Heart on the lips, and soul within the eyes, champagne making its rounds, and the gallant Colonel O'Looney in the chair.——What did all these things leave to be desired? For my own part, I was perfectly satisfied, and laid myself out for an evening of enjoyment. The colonel seemed sombre, and not in his usual spirits. Some of the squirearchy of the neighbourhood were among his guests; and, whether it was that he was resolved to maintain his dignity in the presence of strangers, or that something or other had occurred to displease him, he spoke very little during dinner, and only helped himself to the venison three times. But grief, according to Falstaff, is a thirsty occupation, and the colonel gave evident signs of melancholy, if an opinion on the subject could be formed from the frequency of his challenges to wine. He left not a single person at the table without this mark of attention, from the gentleman on his left, all down the table, till he came in regular gradation, to the gentleman on his right. He then looked round and sighed, like Alexander when he found there were no other worlds to conquer, and finished off with a dram of most supereminent Glenlivet. The rest of the party went

on pretty much as usual. There was a great deal of laughing, which comes to exactly the same thing as if there had been a great deal of wit,—occasionally a song or a toast, and sometimes an anecdote—short, pithy, and pleasing, as an anecdote ought to be, and endowed with that most useful of an anecdote's qualities—that it was forgotten the next minute after it was told. As usual, I kept my eyes and ears about me, and formed my guesses from the countenances of the different strangers, what amusement we might expect from them when the wine had unlocked their storerooms, and showed us what furniture they kept in their "halls of memory." This is rather a fine sentence, but, I am sorry to say, it is not my own. It is a speech of Count Theodore the Superb, in the Fast of St Agnes. What it means when he makes use of it I don't at present recollect; but on this occasion, I mean merely, that I guessed what sort of stories the different visitors would tell, when they had drunk a sufficient quantity to make them communicative. I had not to wait long before this event took place. An old sprucely-dressed gentleman, about half way down the table, had been chattering incessantly from the moment he had finished his soup. He was more like a French marquis of the olden time than a plain downright John Bull. Light-grey eyes, that wandered from one point to another with an unceasing motion; low shelving brow, and prodigious activity in the muscles of his mouth, gave me no very elevated notion of his intellectuals, as Bailie Nicol Jarvie calls it, while at the same time, there was an easiness in his manner, and an insinuating expression in his smile, that made me disposed to receive whatever he said with good humour.

Whatever was said by any of the party was taken hold of at once by this loquacious gentleman, as a peg from which to suspend an anecdote either of himself or of some of his illustrious friends, for it did not take me long to discover that he was one of that very numerous and contemptible class of people that are not willing to be thought acquainted with any one below the degree of a lord. His eloquence seemed only to be equalled by his thirst; and for a little, spare, bloodless, spindle-shanked, Frenchified-looking old gentleman, his feats

in the drinking line struck the whole party with amazement. Bumper after bumper, story after story, pinch after pinch (for he was a prodigious snuffer), followed each other, till at last every eye was turned upon his motions, and every ear open to catch the everlasting stream of his discourse. He seemed more delighted than ever when gradually conversation narrowed from set to set;—first one separate party sinking into silence, and then another, and he was left to have it all his own way, like a bull in a china-shop, or, as that proverb has been improved on by some poet, "sole as the sun in heaven." And he shone with all his might. If he had been a constellation, he could not have been more prodigal of his rays, or more conscious of filling the whole universe with his light. As for me, he nearly blinded me; and, to tell the truth, I was growing tired of his egotism and assumption, when the colonel, with a knowing look round the table, took on himself the task of trotting him out. It was a most glorious sight to see the light eyes of the conversationalist beaming till they almost jumped out of their sockets as he answered O'Looney's questions. All his former anecdotes of himself and others appeared meagre and contemptible, in comparison with the noble achievements he now related. But it was not so much that any of his adventures, taken singly, bore the appearance of inventing—none of them soared above the powers of very ordinary mortals; but the thing that struck us all with the impression of his being a second cousin of Munchausen, was the inordinate number of his performances. No one but the Wandering Jew could by any possibility have crowded so many exploits into the limits of a lifetime;—the mere travelling from one scene of his glory to another, unless on a sunbeam or a railway, would have occupied every year he had lived;—and unless friendships in some soils are more instantaneous in their growth than mushrooms, it must have taken several centuries to render him intimate with the illustrious characters he gave us to understand he was hand in glove with. From Washington to Napoleon, from Bishop Porteous to Thomas Payne, he was well acquainted with every one who had risen above the common herd, for good or evil, for the last fifty or sixty

years. With the ladies he was just as intimate. Madame Tallien and Hannah More seemed honoured with an equal share of his reverence and regard; and sometimes, after a glowing description of the beauty or fascination of some celebrated heroine of the Revolution, he gave us to understand, by a wink from his absurd, grey, glimmering eyes, that he could tell us a great deal more about her if he chose.

"You have travelled a great deal," said the colonel, addressing the old gentleman, whose name was Mr Pye.

"Travelled?—from my youth up. Never had a month's rest since the day I was born. I first saw the light in a packet on the Atlantic—journeyed in my nurse's arms through the whole extent of America, Canada, Mexico, Peru, and Brazil—learned to walk in the island of Malta—to ride in the ancient Thebäid—and picked up all the little information I possess from that most active schoolmaster, both at home and abroad—the World. Last week I landed at Peterhead, on my return from Iceland, and I am now on my way to Japan."

"Then you are tired of ould Europe?"

"As a thrice told tale. Not a mountain rears its head unknown. Valleys, rivers, and cities are familiar to me as my glove. I hate them. Novelty is my passion. I will visit Japan, pass over into China, and spend a season in the royal city of Pekin, or perish in the attempt."

"Well, it's a most pleasant thing," replied the colonel, "to have nothing to do but follow the sun from January to December—now here, now there—no care, no thought. But, Mr Pye, have you no little ties that bind you to one place more than another?"

"Not a bit; human nature is every where the same. Some little things of that sort have, of course, occurred to me as to others; but with me, somehow or other, moving from place to place is not only the way of falling in with new adventures, but the surest method of concluding old ones. What if I had staid all my life amid the rich valleys and aromatic plains of Martinique? I might have been a rich planter, and had my snuff for nothing; but these are scarcely sufficient advantages to counterbalance the monotony of an exist-

ence restricted to a few hundred miles. Ah! no!—but, gentlemen, let me tell you a little *istorietta;* true, 'pon honour."

"Out with it, Mr Pye," said the colonel; and added aside, "Give him his own way, boys, and another story or two will tie him up."

We all prepared to listen, and, I confess, I was of the same opinion with the colonel, that the only way to stop his mouth was to let him run on as fast and as far as he could; for it was now very evident, that what with his talking, snuffing, and drinking combined, he was in a fair way of finding a billet under the mahogany. However, the little fellow, looking round with the self-satisfied air of a bantam cock in the midst of his family, took a prodigious pinch of snuff, and began.

"About forty years ago—how time flies, to be sure!—I found myself wandering among the delicious scenes of an island in the Caribbean sea. Scenery loses all its effect in the eyes of an old man—not that his eyes are dim and can't take in the infinite variety of shades and objects which constitute a landscape, but that hope lies dead within him—the hope of visiting the scene he surveys, and the consciousness of a want of power to run to the extremity of the horizon if he chooses, dulls all the enjoyment he experiences from the loveliest prospects of nature. I feel it so myself. When I have the gout—(I am subject to the gout, and will tell you a good story of my gout and my intimate friend Ali Pasha)—when I have the gout, I say, it is not merely the pain of the disorder that keeps me from enjoying a fine prospect—Oh no, it is the certainty that I can't fly to its utmost limits; inspect close at hand the hills which appear so charming in the distance; and break the enchantment which, according to my dear friend Thomas Campbell—(fine fellow Thomas—I will tell you a good story of him and myself this last autumn with the Algerines)—derives all its strength from the very circumstance of the objects we contemplate being a long way off. Martinique is a beautiful island—hilly, warm, rich, delicious, —the inhabitants! such shapes for sculpture as the bronze Venuses there present, never appeared before the dreams of Phidias or Praxiteles. I took some models of them; for, as

I told my intimate friend, the Canova, when I was in his *studio* with him some years ago—Canova, I said, I *clay* a little myself—(Ah, fine fellow, Canova. I'll tell you a famous anecdote about him and me and the Homœopathic Quin*tessence.*)—Well, in roving among the glorious valleys, I came suddenly and unexpectedly to a pretty delicate European-looking chateau, among a grove of the finest, largest, loveliest magnolias it was ever my good fortune to behold. A fountain played in beautiful jets d'eau in front of the house; and as I had thoughtlessly come very near the building, I couldn't avoid being seen by a party of elegant-looking ladies, who were reposing in the shade of the verandah. One of them, a lady of very dignified and imposing presence, advanced to me—graceful! beautiful! lovely! elegant! Ah! I must take Martinique in my way to Japan. I joined their party—pleasant! witty!—but the loveliest object my eyes ever beheld was the daughter of the lady who had invited me to join their society. She was tall for her age; well developed, though then only twelve or thirteen; the graces of a woman!—the simplicities of a child! fruit and blossom in that delicious country all on the tree at once. I staid with them three days. I suspect hot weather makes hearts very susceptible. I was deeply smitten—at least my philanthropy swelled like boiling water to such a pitch, that it frothed over the receptacle in my heart, which may be called the kettle of friendship, and transferred itself into the cauldron of Love. Happy days! when love and friendship are nearly the same, passions both. The evening before my departure, we had a large party of the neighbouring proprietors. The young lady and I seemed both disconsolate: they rallied us on the subject. We blushed—at least she did; and the sun by this time had put me into a condition of perpetual modesty. How beautiful she looked, when her long black eyelashes hung over her downcast eyes, and her bronze cheek caught a deeper tinge from the rushing into her face of all the eloquent blood! By way of passing off the time, and raising our spirits, we had all sorts of games and diversions. Among others, I gained immortal honour by the manner in which I enacted the part of a prophetic sibyl. I disguised myself in

the garments of one of the female domestics, hid my face in the folds of my mantilla, affected the step of extreme old age, and emerged, unrecognised by the whole company, from a clump of fine guava-trees on the left. My palm was crossed with silver to propitiate the fates. I gave such responses as pleased the party; to one promised an unexpected present—to another a handsome partner at the governor's ball. But when it came to my turn to give my answer to the object of my admiration, my desire to procure for her all the happiness the world could afford very nearly failed in its object, from the anxiety with which I pursued it. Long, anxiously, tremblingly, did I hold her hand, pretending to learn her future fortunes from the crossings of her palms. At last, in a voice now effectually disguised by the intensity of my feelings, I promised her a throne and a sceptre, wider and prouder in their sway than earth had seen. How they laughed at this announcement, and made their obeisances to the future queen! But the heart of the dear creature herself, I perceived, swelled beneath the grandeur of her fortunes. She, however, laughed, and told me, when my prophecy was realised, to present myself at her court, and she would reward me for the promises I gave her. I disappeared as quietly as I could, and enjoyed for the rest of the evening the impression I had made in my assumed character. The morning came: we parted. It is not surely vanity, at this distance of time, that makes me assure you, that the beautiful young creature suffered as severely the woes of our separation as I did. We sighed, we shook hands; again we sighed; and just on leaving—'twas in a corner of the building, you'll observe, where we were totally unobserved—she was gathering some flowers, partly to hide her confusion; and just on going away, she raised her beautiful head, and looked into my face—we were within half a foot of each other, and"——Here the old fellow gave a very knowing wink, and went on. "What could I do? But it glows on my lips at this moment—Ah!

"I left Martinique, and have never seen it from that hour to this. But you will say, what has all this history of an adventure in a distant island forty years ago to do with the

remark I made on the advantages of travelling? A great deal. What if I had never gone there? What a stupid fellow I might have been—unable to entertain any party I may happen to meet with, with the account of incidents not quite in the ordinary mill-trot course of affairs! But my adventure is not concluded. I met the beauteous islander again. For twenty years I was a wanderer. I was married —a husband—a father—a chief, for fifteen years, in the Squish-na-whignoo tribe of the Usbecks. Pretty darlings! I will tell you a famous anecdote of my eldest boy, young Quax-coo-nuddy, a sweet creature, with the fine flat nose of his mother, and the variegated cheeks and perforated lips peculiar to the nation. How I caught him feasting on the raw buttock of a horse, which he had ham-strung, the young rogue, one morning when he was hungry! Ah, sweet playful darlings! But, as I was saying, or going to say, for twenty or twenty-five years I had withdrawn myself entirely from civilised existence, confined myself to the primitive costume and natural manners of our species, when suddenly a longing came upon me one evening for the enjoyments of artificial life. We had been banished from our rich pastures on the banks of the Squeak-buddo by a stronger tribe, cooped up between some narrow defiles, and on the eve of perishing of hunger—at that time I was fat. I overheard a party of the elders discoursing on the propriety of living on our own resources, which, by the metaphorical genius of their language, meant neither more nor less than eating each other. All at once I yearned after the fictitious wants of Europe—gave them the slip—traversed steppes and deserts, crossed rivers, scaled mountains, and found myself prisoner in the hands of the French, on the evening of the glorious battle of the Pyramids. How we laughed! for Kleber and I were old friends. I will tell you some capital anecdotes of Kleber and myself—how we roasted old Denon!—But time passed on. I grew tired of the slow movements of regularly disciplined troops—evaporated one evening, and pursued my way along the coast of Africa to the site of ancient Carthage—thought of Marius, Hannibal, and two or three of the Scipios—passed

over to Gibraltar—and for many months divided myself among the isles of Greece—

——— 'the isles of Greece,
Where burning Sappho wept and sung!'—

I will tell you some admirable incidents that happened to my noble friend Byron and me.—But at last, about the year eighteen hundred and six, I found myself in Paris. How I enjoyed the high excitement of that glorious time! The French are certainly an exquisite people when they have every thing their own way.—Theatres, tournaments—for in those days we had tournaments—(Ah! what a fine fellow Murat was! I will tell you what splendid amusement he and I had afterwards at Naples)—Well, theatres, tournaments, shows, balls, masquerades, gambling, courting, quizzing, and all that sort of thing, at last grew tiresome. I never frequented the court. Napoleon put me too much in mind of my father-in-law Plash-in-a-dubba, which means Thunder and Blood—the chief of the Usbecks. I kept quietly at home, and formed a delightful coterie of Opposition patriots. D'ye know Chateaubriand? Finest fellow in the world. He and I became acquainted on Mount Lebanon, and often smoked our pipes in the shadow of the Temple. Well, I was riding quietly one day in the neighbourhood of Paris—felt a longing to dive into the woods—left my horse at the first cottage I came to, and sauntered through the deep glades and serene recesses of the forests in that quarter. Suddenly I came upon a charming mansion; and in the porch of it sat a party of ladies. 'Heavens!' I exclaimed, as memory carried me back to the magnificent valleys of Martinique, and the chateau I told you of, where I had spent the happiest days of my existence—'Heavens! how precisely alike in its circumstances is this scene with the other!' and, as if to complete the resemblance, a lady, advancing from the circle, politely invited me to approach. Such graceful, elegant, high-bred ladies it was delicious to behold. And one of them—what grace! what majesty in every motion! eyes heavenly black! lashes long, and casting a celestial shade over a cheek so ravishingly beautiful, that the summer of

eighteen seemed still glowingly walking hand in hand with the ripe autumn of forty-two. Oh, heavens! how charming is the sight of radiant, matronly beauty! How respectful, and yet how affectionate, seemed they all to this surpassing spirit—this crowning rose of the whole wreath!—We laughed, we talked, and ever and anon, when our eyes met, I felt a palpitation at my heart, and heard a voice in the inmost recesses of my spirit, saying, 'Is this a stranger?' Hours passed on; one by one the other ladies of the party retired. We conversed together on many subjects; in fact, conversation assumed such a depth of devoted admiration on one side, and of well-pleased acquiescence on the other, that—that—it rose, I assure you, far above the level of ordinary flirtation. Her voice, the sweetest sound in nature, thrilled me at every sentence she uttered; but, at last, what was my amazement when a lady, stepping speedily towards us, said, with a profound obeisance, 'The Prince de Talleyrand,'—(I have some charming accounts of dear old Talley to give you.) 'The Prince de Talleyrand craves an audience of the Empress.'

"The Empress! my knee was on the ground in a moment. She rose—she looked at me with a charming smile,—and as she turned to go away, I whispered in a voice that trembled under the enormous weight of adoration it carried, Josephine! Again she looked at me—a thousand thoughts rushed into both our bosoms at that moment. Martinique, the chateau, the flowers in the parterre, all rose before us like a vision of fairy land, and in a voice that was soft, friendly, all that my soul could wish, she"—— Here the old gentleman winked with a very knowing expression.—"The Prince de Talleyrand was refused an audience for that day. The chain that had been broken twenty years before was soldered together so neatly that it was difficult in that enchanting moment to believe that a single link had ever been severed. 'Twasn't long after this Napoleon proceeded to the divorce. In all countries there are ill-natured people—even in the shades of Malmaison the tongue of scandal was not mute. They talked; but talk or not, I can never persuade myself that Maria Louisa owed the imperial crown to so low a feeling in the bosom of the Emperor as jealousy of his wife. I may say

that she was the most discreet crowned head I ever met with; our interviews were so secret and well contrived—her ladies were so honourable and so bound over to silence, that, as I said, they even made their tea with the waters of Lethe—'twas thought a goodish observation at the time—but, as I was about to remark, every thing was really so admirably conducted, that though we met—oh, delicious meetings!—I feel perfectly convinced that the Emperor never entertained the slightest suspicion. How strange that a friendship commenced in Martinique should have come to its full maturity at Malmaison, Marseilles, and even,—ay, even in the Tuileries!"

At this point of his story the old gentleman looked round, and was much delighted with the gaping attention that was paid by all present to every word he was saying. This attention was owing partly to the hint of the colonel, that an uninterrupted story would exhaust him, and put an end to his chattering, by aiding the effects of the wine, so as to silence him by sending him under the table, and partly that we were all ineffably amused by the absurd rhodomontades of such a pigmy-looking, ridiculous old boaster. A whispering enquiry was now sent round the table to ascertain who had introduced him, and who and what he really was. The answer returned was, that he had introduced himself to a young cornet of the name of Winthrop, who knew no more of him than that he seemed a jolly old talkative fellow, and had asked him to the mess on the strength of his fluent tongue and gentlemanlike manners. We were a little puzzled how to act. Drunk or mad there was no doubt our new acquaintance must be, and it required no great stretch of ill-nature to conclude that he was a little of both. Old Hixie, who had cast very sour looks on the narrator of all these marvels, was particularly enraged at seeing a stranger so entirely monopolize the conversation. Perhaps the noble Hixie was excited against the embellisher by the old feeling that gave rise to the proverb of the enmity between two of a trade. The colonel, however, took the shortest mode of settling matters, which luckily proved to be effectual.

"And pray, Mr Pye," said the colonel, "what sort of

tipple did they give you among the Usbecks when you were there?"

"Capital; stronger than brandy—a little sweet, white-coloured, and plentiful as water."

"Then I suppose you didn't spare the canteen?"

"We drank it by the quart—a cocoa-nut scooped out, holding about a bottle, was a most delicious morning draught. Ah! how my wife and I used to enjoy it in the confounded cold mornings before the dew had retired."

A wink from the colonel was sufficient to bring in a very richly chased silver-mounted cocoa-nut drinking cup, a bottle of claret was poured into it, and O'Looney, handing it to the former sovereign of the Tartars, said,

"Here, my prince, example is always better than precept; give us a small specimen of the way an Usbeck treats himself to a dram."

In a moment the old gentleman had the goblet at his lips, sucked it in like the vortex of the Maelstrom, turned his little grey eyes up to the ceiling, and after an ineffectual attempt to afflict us with another oration, settled gradually down—till, slipping off the corner of his chair, he assured us, by a snore of astounding loudness, that he was fairly sewed up for the night.

"Well, I think," said Mr Hixie, "this chattering old gentleman has supplied us with lies enough to last for a month or two."

"How do we know that what he has told us is untrue?" replied a Mr Vincent, a gentleman about forty or five-and-forty years of age, who sat on the colonel's right hand, "there is nothing, you'll observe, impossible in any of the adventures he has told us."

"Impossible?" responded Hixie, "quite impossible; look at the ugliness of the little monster, and tell us to believe his cock-and-a-bull stories about empresses and princesses."

"Well, for all that, it is certain that Europeans have lived very often among tribes of barbarians; that commoners have flirted to an alarming extent with empresses and queens—that civilians have been taken prisoners in Egypt, and that

many have desired to visit Japan and the capital of the Celestial Empire."

"But not this little ugly chattering fellow—I will never believe a word of it," said Hixie; "so if any gentleman has a mind to tell us another story, let it be something more likely than the nonsense we have heard from the friend of young Winthrop."

"He is no friend of mine. He called upon me this morning—talked for half-an-hour, agreed to dine with me at the mess, and I think we have had a good deal of fun out of him. His story, to be sure, did not introduce any thing about a deserter or a Portuguese, but 'twas a very good story notwithstanding."

"Faugh—the taste of it is in my mouth yet; and if I were in the President's chair, I would either sconce you a bumper of salt and water for introducing so plaguy a chatterbox, or condemn you to put it out of our heads by a story that has some little truth in it."

"And a very good motion it is," said the colonel; "so, my boy, Winthrop, after you have cleared your throat with a glass or two out of this fresh magnum, I order you to tell us an adventure that you can seriously vouch to be true."

Young Winthrop bowed to the decision of the chair, and after obeying the injunctions as to the clearing his throat, cast up his eyes to the ceiling, and after a preparatory cough, began—"Once upon a time"——but my paper is now finished, and my pen is so shockingly bad, that I find it impossible to be sure of my spelling, so I will keep Winthrop's story for the next forenoon I am disengaged.

CHAPTER XI.

"ONCE on a time," said Cornet Winthrop, "the quiet town of Higglesworth was frightened from its propriety by a very well-authenticated apparition. It was about six feet high; had a powerful pair of whiskers, bold, joyous-looking black eyes, and the most fashionably made clothes that had ever been seen in the county. Every night, just as it became dust, it made its appearance under the garden-wall of a fine old manor-house, about half a mile from the town, paced slowly up and down for a considerable length of time, and on the approach of any passenger, either glided noiselessly past him, or, as was most commonly the case, disappeared. Various conjectures were hazarded as to this very unusual occurrence;—many enquiries were made, and the conclusion to which the wise people of Higglesworth came was this, that the apparition, whatever it was, was that of a very handsome fellow, about four or five-and-twenty, with the pride of a bashaw and the stiffness of a Turk, from which two circumstances they unanimously decided that it had very much the appearance of a military man. It was traced to the gateway of the Piebald Horse, the principal hostel of the borough, and, in fact, the most sceptical in such matters were convinced that the reports on this occasion, like some of the fashionable songs, were founded on facts; for the Boniface of the aforesaid hostel deposed, that for the last ten days the identical ghost had occupied his two best rooms, being No. 10 and No. 12; and, moreover, was the best judge of port wine that had ever taken up his residence in the Piebald Horse. In a few days after these facts were elicited, the phantom discontinued its appearances, but not before it was rumoured that on one or two occasions it had not 'walked' alone, but had been accompanied by another apparition in a bonnet and cloak. Whether this last circumstance was true or false, the good folks of Higglesworth never discovered; but I have every reason to believe it was true, as I have heard the story over and over again from the two persons

who were principally concerned in the adventure. My friend Harry Villiers was as fine, jovial a hearted fellow as could be imagined. Some people might perhaps say he was not so clever as he might have been, as I believe he did not pretend to see much beauty in the preface to Bellendenus, never having heard of that performance, and altogether was inclined to consider the schoolmen, as he himself would have expressed it, considerable humbugs. But his judgment in horse flesh, pleasant small talk, and excellent disposition, went a great way to supply his want of appreciation of the classical merits of my old pedagogue, Dr Parr. In the manor-house, which I have told you was about half a mile from Higglesworth, lived a gentleman of the name of Tracy, one of those characters who are commoner in life than is often imagined, who make up, by prodigious suavity to strangers, and an affectation of goodness and generosity, for the peevishness and meanness they display to their dependents. Every one was eloquent in the praises of Mr Tracy,—the kind, the good, the indulgent Mr Tracy,—except his servants, whom he nearly starved, and his daughter, whom he tyrannised over as if she had been his slave. I don't exactly know whether Harry Villiers troubled his head much about the sufferings of our sable brethren in the colonies, but I know he was most indefatigable in his zeal for the emancipation of the beautiful Julia Tracy. For this purpose he would not have grudged twenty millions out of his pocket, if he had had them; but unfortunately, though he had a very decentish sort of fortune, he had neither enough to pay off the national debt, nor even, as he feared, to satisfy the expectations of the grasping and ambitious papa. However, he had one consolation, and that was, that he knew the daughter was neither grasping nor ambitious. A captaincy of dragoons, a small estate, a few thousands in cash, the strength of a Hercules, and expectancies from an ancient aunt, left him very little room for care or despondency—not to mention that his fortnight's visit to the venerable borough of Higglesworth left him very little room to despair in a matter in which he was more deeply interested than even the condition of his funds.

"On mounting the coach which was to convey him to

Cheltenham, his reflections were by no means unpleasant. He had no doubt of gaining the full approval of his aunt, and he was now proceeding to her house to lay the whole story of his love before her. This aunt of his, Mrs Edward Villiers, was very well known in the gay society of the city of pumps and vanities. Fat, fair, and fifty-two, a fortune in her own right, and a surpassing genius for whist—what more had she to desire? She had every thing that could conduce to happiness or comfort; and had only two impediments to her felicity, and these were a heart with the susceptibility of sixteen, and a certificate of her birth, which was dated 1781. How she had got through the twenty years of her widowhood without a second yoke, nobody could imagine. It could not be from the circumstance of no one making her an offer, as she had seldom fewer than half-a-dozen, who were anxious to prove their estimation of her beauty and accomplishments, by presiding at the best furnished table in Cheltenham, and taking possession of one of the prettiest estates in the county of Glo'ster. Of all these obliging and disinterested offers, my friend Harry was the confidant. She never gave a decided answer, but responded to the declarations of her suitors in so very statesmanlike a manner, that the acutest of them was puzzled as to her meaning. They still lived in hope, and I suspect there were few old bachelors, who, after the first month or two of the season, did not look with very peculiar feelings on the pillared portals and beautiful plate glass windows of No. 24. And when, in addition, a handsome dark-brown chariot, with a knowing looking little postilion, came flashing round the corner, and pulled up at the door, in waiting for the lady of the mansion, it was astonishing to see how gouty old squires and liverless nabobs 'swaled jauntily' along the pavement, and summoned glances of intense admiration as the sweet 'cause of all their care and all their woe' tripped into the carriage as lightly as could be expected from thirteen stone and a half, and deposited herself on the cushion with a ponderosity that proved what unbounded confidence she had in—the strength of the springs.

"To this lady Harry presented himself; and after a *tête-à-tête* dinner, the aunt and nephew had a long and serious conversation.

"'And so you see, my dear aunt Dorothy'——

"'La! Harry, why will you always call me aunt Dorothy?—'tis such a ridiculous old-fashioned name.'

"'What shall I call you—Antiquity, or Antipathy, or what?'

"'I was christened Dorothea Leonora.'

"'Well, then, my dear aunt Dorothea Leonora, I am going to tell you a secret.'

"'Oh! delightful—somebody else wishes to be introduced to me. Well, 'tis too bad. Is he young or old?'

"'Who?'

"'The gentleman.'

"'I haven't said a single word about a gentleman; I was only going to tell you, in return for all the confidences you have reposed in me, that I am most tremendously in love.'

"'You? How can you talk such nonsense? Such a thing is contrary to law.'

"'What is contrary to law?'

"'Why, marrying one's uncle's widow, to be sure.'

"'What the deuce do you mean? I never said a syllable about uncles or widows, or any thing of the sort. Do you remember the Tracys, who lived in Chamberfield house?'

"'To be sure I do,' cried Mrs Villiers; 'what a dear, good tempered, pleasant man they say he is.'

"'Hem! do you remember his daughter?'

"'Tall—very handsome—dark eyes—I remember perfectly—rather bald, I think; with whiskers slightly grizzled.'

"'Whiskers—Julia Tracy—why, aunt, you must be dreaming—I tell you she is the most beautiful little creature that fancy e'er conceived or poet feigned.'

"'Takes snuff, I recollect,' continued the widow; 'they told me he was very rich. Certainly, Harry, you may bring him as soon as you like.'

"'Well, I see I must keep my secret for some other time. You will go on talking about Mr Tracy, when all I want you

to do is to listen for a few minutes till I have finished telling you about his daughter.'

"'Ah! poor thing, I recollect her very well. What have you to tell me of her?'

"'Simply, that I hope very shortly she will stand in as near a relationship to you as I do. Will you treat her well?'

"'Gracious! how you hurry one. Has Mr Tracy empowered you to say all this?'

"'Not he—but Julia has.'

"'Indeed? I should like to be a little more acquainted with them before I decide on so important a matter.'

"'She will be as dutiful to you as if you were her mother She has no female relation, and on that account her home is of course not so happy as it would otherwise be.'

"'She must be rather a sensible sort of a person for one so young. How old is she?'

"'Not quite eighteen.'

"'Poor child! what a time she has to wait before she reaches the maturity of her charms.'

"As she said this, Mrs Villiers looked with a benign expression at the image of a robust lady with a red face reflected in the opposite mirror—'Did she tell you all this herself?'

"'Every word of it, and a great deal more besides. She has a great deal of delicacy on the subject, and made a point of gaining your consent and full acquiescence before any offer was formally made.'

"'I must make some more enquiries—are they coming again to Cheltenham?'

"'Oh, yes—and that is the reason I am so anxious to secure a favourable reception for her before hand. Chamberfield house is let, and she tells me her father is looking out for another, if possible, in this very street.'

"'How excessively complimentary! Did you tell them I intended to leave this house for the summer, as Dr Snatcher recommends the seaside?'

"'Oh, yes, I told her that—but I was in hopes you would remain this summer, more especially as they are coming here in a week or two. He is resolved not to be very distant.

When he is within a door or two of this he will of course cultivate the acquaintance very sedulously; and if every thing is settled satisfactorily, it will prevent the trouble of moving.'

"She laughed good-humouredly as he said this, and Harry was delighted with the friendliness of the manner in which she entered into his views. He had now little doubt, since he had obtained the concurrence of his aunt, that even Mr Tracy would be satisfied with his proposals, and he accordingly prepared himself to open the siege in due form the moment that gentleman arrived.

"In the mean time affairs at the manor-house were going on even more uncomfortably than usual. Mr Tracy was forced to expend so much of his good nature and pleasantry among the parties he had met at dinner, that he had not a grain of any of them left for his home consumption. His harshness, in fact, seemed every hour to increase, and it was with great delight that Julia heard him announce his intention of immediately proceeding to Cheltenham. She was ordered to have all her preparations completed by a certain day, and it was resolved that he should write to the Plough, securing apartments till they could obtain a house. Julia ventured to suggest the propriety of writing to Mrs Villiers, to ascertain whether she intended to let her mansion for the summer, and as Mr Tracy had a particular liking to the street where it was situated, he resolved to act upon her suggestion. The letter was written, with a request that the answer might be addressed to the Plough—the preparations were all completed, and in due course of time a handsome travelling chariot deposited the father and daughter at the door of the hotel. Not unobserved did they make their appearance, and a flush on the cheek of the young lady, and perhaps a sudden start, showed that she was not unconscious of the presence of Harry Villiers. He was now delighted with the certainty of being within a reasonable distance of the object of his admiration; every day, he felt satisfied, would throw them together, and he resolved to cultivate the friendship of the old man in spite of the knowledge he had of the repulsiveness of his qualities.

"Buoyed up with these pleasing anticipations, he hurried

off to the house of Mrs Villiers, to announce to her the arrival of the party—but for the last few days there had been an air of mystery about that usually ingenuous lady, which puzzled him very much. On the present occasion she received his announcement with an affectation of such interesting consciousness, and made so many exclamations of wonder, surprise, and indecision, that Harry was perfectly astonished at the fuss she made about the arrival of one who was so shortly to be her niece. But his aunt's eccentricities were well known to him, and the kind way in which she spoke of Julia, the compliments she paid to her good sense and delicacy, completely reconciled him to the old lady's absurd behaviour in other respects. He was particularly delighted with the interest she seemed to take in his happiness, when she told him that in order to settle the business as speedily as possible, she intended to invite Mr Tracy to call on her the next morning; and that then, whatever arrangement was come to, the comforts of Julia should not be forgotten. With this intention she retired to her writing desk, and after an hour or two of hard labour completed a note, addressed it to Mr Tracy, and sent it off to the Plough hotel. On this Harry was enraptured with the prospect of success that his aunt's co-operation afforded him, and resolved to make a formal offer of his heart and hand, as it is called, on that very day. He called on Mr Tracy for that purpose, but found neither of them at home; he therefore thought it best to lose no time, and though he was no great penman, he managed to ask the father's consent, and assured him of his aunt's concurrence, in a very business-like manner, upon paper. His acquaintance with the father was very slight; and his love for Julia had grown up imperceptibly by their frequently meeting at the houses of mutual friends; particularly at the house of a distant relation of Julia, with whom, during her father's residence in Cheltenham, she was nearly domesticated, and who did all in her power to encourage the flirtation. Satisfied with himself and pleased with all the world, he went to bed that night and dreamed of a parson in a white surplice, and a couple of postilions with marriage favours in their caps.

"On the following day Mrs Villiers was all expectation. She was superbly dressed, and was all the morning in the drawingroom practising her airs and graces.

"'La! Harry,' she said, 'I wonder what can be keeping Mr Tracy—he seems quite a man of business.'

"'How do you know?'

"'By his letter, Harry; but, la! I haven't shown you his letter yet. He comes to the point at once, and misses out all high-flown compliments about beauty, and all that sort of thing. 'Tis quite a new style of making an offer.'

"'I don't see, for my part,' replied Harry, 'what use there is, in so plain a matter, for ridiculous compliments on either side, between two straightforward sensible people.'

"'Why, you know, Harry, one likes a little delicate attention; but perhaps Mr Tracy and I had better leave little trifles of that sort to you and Julia, after we have come to some definitive arrangement. But surely Mr Tracy will be here immediately—hadn't you better leave me to receive him alone? It is a delicate business to manage in the presence of a third party.'

"'Ah! my dear aunt, you can't tell how much I am obliged to you for your kindness. Depend upon it, you will find Julia as grateful as possible when you have given her a happy home.'

"And so saying, he left the room, and proceeded to the house of the friend where his acquaintance with Julia had commenced, and, though it was still what is called early, most unaccountably, and of course unexpectedly, the first person he encountered on entering the drawingroom was Julia herself. A few words sufficed to explain, in Harry's most eloquent style, that his aunt entered warmly into his design, and had appointed a meeting that very morning with Mr Tracy, to plead his cause as effectually as she could; and, considering that Harry was her next of kin, and that she was reputed to be enormously rich, the two sanguine young people entertained little doubt that the sulky selfishness of the old man would be overcome, and his consent be readily obtained to their union.

"In the mean time Mr Tracy, with his face dressed out in

its sweetest smiles, presented himself in the drawingroom of Mrs Villiers. That lady looked as sentimental as she possibly could, and the excessive politeness of the gentleman's manner, and his systematic deference and respect, added greatly to her embarrassment. After a few observations about the weather, and other matters of that kind, the old gentleman drew his chair closer to the sofa of his attentive listener, and said, 'And now, my dear madam, will you permit me to say, that your answer to my letter was highly satisfactory to me?'

"'Oh—dear—well—but you will understand from it, Mr Tracy, that I have said nothing definitive on the subject.'

"'Certainly—but the tone of kindness in the letter—according so well with the amiable character of the writer—and the benignant expression of her countenance—leads me to hope, that the business will be quickly settled to our mutual satisfaction.'

"'Oh—dear—you rather hurry me—one can't exactly decide on so important a point. My nephew, Harry Villiers'——

"'Pardon me, my dear madam, for interrupting you,' said Mr Tracy, making a strong effort to retain the suavity of his look and manner, 'I have received a note from him; but—the matter on which I am speaking to you just now, is far more interesting *to me*.'

"'Oh, dear—you are very polite, I am sure.'

"'Have you considered the proposal I did myself the honour of making you?'

"'Oh—I assure you I value the compliment you have paid me very highly, but these things require deliberation. I am not so young as I once was.'

"'Madam?'

"'The first bloom of youth is past, but I am not ignorant, that many sensible men prefer a more advanced—a more mature—perhaps a more subdued period of life.'

"'Yes—precisely—a most valuable remark,' replied Mr Tracy, looking considerably puzzled. 'This seems a very comfortable house, Mrs Villiers.'

"'Very—I am very much attached to it, and leave it with regret, though only for a very short time.'

"'O, my dear madam, I should not wish to deprive you of it long.'

"'You are very obliging.'

"'I shall take particular care of this very elegant furniture.'

"'Sir?'

"'I say, that when I get possession of this house, I shall take care that the furniture suffers no damage when I am master.'

"'Really—why, 'pon my word, Mr Tracy, you take one by surprise. I have not bound myself by what I said to you in my note, and many previous arrangements'——

"'Oh! as for that, my dear Mrs Villiers, the details can easily be managed by our respective solicitors—papers and things of that sort drawn up—formally signed, sealed, and delivered—but I thought it was the least I could do to make you my offer in person.'

"'Nothing can be more flattering. When I have taken a little more time to think'——

"'Why, there can't be much occasion for thought. Nay, I am willing to make it a sort of provisional bargain—and to dissolve the connexion whenever you shall desire it.'

"'Mr Tracy! I am astonished.'

"'Nay, more, my dear madam, it would perhaps really be the best plan if you were to take me on trial for a short time;—say, six weeks or two months.'

"'Mr Tracy! I am shocked.'

"'In short, my dear madam, I feel certain your good-nature will excuse me when I tell you, that my only object in making you the offer which I did, was to get possession of this house as quickly as I could.'

"'Really, sir, your language is very plain.'

"'I think, when people of our time of life enter into any business at all, we can't be too plain to each other—it prevents many disagreeable after-thoughts and misunderstandings. You know my wishes.'

"'Perfectly; after your very explicit declaration, it is impossible to mistake your meaning.'

"'Then, dear madam, answer me in one word, will you take me on trial or not?'

"'Mr Tracy, are you serious? I never heard of such a proposition.'

"'The commonest thing in life—I will bind myself under a penalty—but our attorneys can settle all the legal particulars. Be kind enough to let me know, in the open friendly manner you have shown all through this conference, by what time your arrangements can be completed, so as to give me possession of the house.'

"''Pon my word, Mr Tracy, if I was surprised at the plainness and absence of compliment with which you addressed me in the first letter you sent to me from Higglesworth, the mode in which you prosecute your suit is still more unusual. One would scarcely suppose that you came here on so momentous a business as a proposal of marriage.'

"'That, my dear madam, can wait till you and I have come to some settlement upon matters more nearly concerning ourselves than the love of a thoughtless young man for a silly young woman.'

"'I understood from my nephew that your daughter's comfort was one of your principal inducements for making these proposals to me.'

"'Certainly; a comfortable home would be a great increase to her happiness, and that you have it in your power to afford her.'

"'She seems a very sensible, considerate person, and I am highly indebted to her for the favourable opinion she entertains of me;—but one's own happiness is to be considered first—and till I know more of you, you will of course excuse me if I hesitate before taking so very serious a step.'

"'Serious? as what?'

"'As changing my situation.'

"'Oh! I have already told you that I wish you to do so only for a very short time.'

"'Sir? You quite amaze me—I never expected so very odd a manner of making an offer.'

"'An offer? my dear madam—an offer of what?'

"'Of marriage, to be sure.'

"'Marriage! Mrs Villiers,—an offer of marriage? I have certainly received a proposal for the hand of my daughter from Captain Villiers, your nephew—but that is the only offer of the kind I am at present acquainted with.'

"'Indeed!' said Mrs Villiers, 'and pray, what was your intention in sending me a letter which I received from you, dated from your estate at Higglesworth?'

"'Madam, I took the liberty of offering myself as tenant of this house, as I understood you were anxious to visit the seaside for a few months. You held out every prospect of acceding to my wishes, in the answer you addressed to me at the Plough hotel. I was in hopes, as you invited me to visit you to-day, it was to fulfil my expectations in this respect; but I fear, madam, your thoughts are so filled with the proposals of your nephew, which I understand have met with your full sanction, that'——

"'Proposals of my nephew! I never heard of them.'

"'Indeed? Then my answer to the young gentleman shall be very succinct and intelligible. Will you allow me in the mean time to wish you a very good morning?' And bowing in a very stately manner to the astonished Mrs Villiers, he smiled benignly, and stalked out of the apartment.

"'Well,' said the lady, when she was left alone, 'if this isn't a very puzzling piece of business I don't know what is. Here comes a gentleman, after writing me an open declaration, and after receiving an answer to it, leaving him in doubt whether he is accepted or not—and tells me, after a deal of rudeness, about marrying him on trial, that his whole object in writing me that letter was to gain possession of my house. I wish Harry Villiers would come home.' And, at her wish, her nephew appeared.

"'I am come, my dear aunt, to thank you again for your kindness, and to hear the issue of your interview with Mr Tracy.' Mrs Villiers made no answer to this, but pulled a letter out of her reticule, put it into her nephew's hand, and said, 'read this, and tell me what you think of it.' He did as he was commanded, and read as follows.

" ' *Higglesworth Manor-house.*

" ' It would perhaps require an apology if I, a comparative stranger, took the liberty of addressing a lady on a subject in which I am deeply interested; but to you, my dear Mrs Villiers, I open myself at once—relying on your good nature and willingness to oblige. In what I am about to say, I proceed on the supposition that you are as anxious for a change as I am. We both suffer from the solitude of our situations; and at this season of the year Cheltenham itself must be as dull and uninteresting as the retirement from which I write. One of my objects in making my proposal to you, is to secure a comfortable home for my daughter. A house so replete with the elegances which have been procured by the taste of Mrs Villiers must be admirably suited for this purpose. Perhaps we might arrange matters to our mutual satisfaction, if you would allow me to make you mistress of Higglesworth Manor-house, while you installed me as master of Number Twenty-Four. On this and all other matters, when we proceed to final settlements, you will find me disposed to be liberal. I will not conceal from you that I am anxious to come to a conclusion as speedily as possible; and if you will write to me—addressed to the Plough hotel—whether I may hope to succeed in my suit, you will confer a great obligation on, madam, your most devoted, humble servant,

' Frederick Tracy.'

" ' There!' cried Mrs Villiers--' what do you think of that?'

" ' Why, that it is a piece of hypocritical rigmarole; why didn't he apply to your agent at once?'

" ' Why should he apply to my agent?'

" ' To ascertain your terms, to be sure.'

" ' Harry, Harry, you're as bad as Mr Tracy—you have read the old gentleman's letter—what is it?—what does he want?'

" ' He wants to take your house, to be sure, for the summer months; for I told Julia you were going to the sea-side.'

" ' Oh dear—well—did I ever—Well—if that isn't—what shall I do? What will he think?'

" ' Why, what's the matter, aunt?—what have you done?'

" ' Done!—why, I've answered his letter as if it had been an offer of marriage, and not a bargain about my house. Dear, dear! what shall I do?'

" ' Let me see what you said in your answer,' said Harry, almost in convulsions of laughter at the perplexities of his aunt. She gave him a copy of the epistle she had addressed to Mr Tracy, and he read—

" ' Sir,

" ' I can't help thanking you for the honour you have done me in asking my assistance to make your daughter's home happy. This house is a very comfortable one; and I will not deny that Higglesworth Manor-house, to one so fond of the country as I am, has considerable attractions; but we will leave these things for after deliberation. Perhaps a personal interview would answer our purposes better than a correspondence; and if you will do me the honour to call upon me to-morrow at twelve or one o'clock, I shall perhaps have it in my power to give Miss Tracy a comfortable home, by an arrangement which will meet with the approbation of all parties.—I remain your obedient servant,

' Dorothea Leonora Villiers.'

" At the moment that Harry finished the reading of this statesmanlike document, a servant entered the room, and presented him with a note. It was from old Tracy, and was in these words:—

" ' Sir,

" ' In consequence of a very extraordinary interview I had this day with your aunt, in which she professed an entire ignorance of your having honoured Miss Tracy with the offer of your hand, I beg, on the part of my daughter, to decline your farther acquaintance; and I have the honour to be, sir, &c.

' Frederick Tracy.'

"'What the devil is this you've been doing?' cried Harry. 'Did I not tell you that Julia insisted on my getting a promise of a kind reception from you before she would allow matters to go any farther?'

"'Yes—but la! now only think—I really thought she had sent me that message in consequence of knowing that her father intended to ask me to become her stepmother.'

"'The deuce you did! and so with your nonsense about marrying old Tracy, you have destroyed my happiness and Julia's!'

"'No—I haven't—and now that I think of it, it will get me out of the absurd scrape I have got into, if I write to Mr Tracy in your behalf.'

"'Will you?—Then never mind what has happened—you are a dear good-tempered old soul after all; and if you think old Tracy has treated you ill in any respect, I'll call the old rascal out—though, unfortunately, it is not the fashion to shoot one's father-in-law.'

"Matters were soon settled to the satisfaction of all parties. Mrs Villiers retained her house in Cheltenham, and the young people built a capital new mansion on her property in the vale of Glo'ster, where they live—as the nursery stories used to end—as happy as the day is long. And so, gentlemen, there is an end of my story."

"Well, it is not quite so romantic as the tale of my little old friend under the table here," said Mr Hixie; "and I really believe it has every chance of being true; for, curse me if I see any difficulty in the business from beginning to end. I knew whenever you opened your mouth how 'twould be. Only I think old Tracy was an unconscionable old blockhead not to jump at the widow. If I ever find my way to Cheltenham, I shall make an assault on Number Twenty-four myself"

CHAPTER XII.

SHORTLY after this the gentlemen on the right and left of Colonel O'Looney took their leave, and withdrew. There was also a break in the line here and there perceptible on looking down the table, which gave it rather a straggling appearance in the eyes of that most orderly commander. So, having given the word to fall in more closely, and ordered fresh glasses and another importation of Lafitte, he settled himself firmly in his chair with an attitude that plainly expressed how little it was his intention to be in a hurry to leave it. There is a great deal of eloquence in the way a man settles himself on his chair. On looking at the colonel, surrounded with oceans of claret, and lifting his flaming forehead half way up to the roof, you thought of the Bass rock or Gibraltar, and might as soon have an expectation of their vacating their seats as of the colonel's quitting his. When to this you added his commanding presence, jovial countenance, and prodigious strength, and recollected his unequalled feats, not only with the decanters, but with knife and fork, you will agree with the remark of a pleasant, quiet, petit-maitreish, young gentleman who sat upon my left, that the gallant chairman formed an excellent representative of the Feedian Jove.* I have forgot my classics; but if you have not, perhaps you will see the resemblance. We all drew closer together—a nice family party of his "boys," as he called us, amounting to a couple of dozen; and as there were now no strangers (for by this time I had come to be considered as almost one of themselves), the mists of formality cleared gradually off the features of our host, and revealed the landscape of his good-humoured face, waving with a rich harvest of drollery and fun. All the little knots into which we had divided ourselves were combined into one compact body. He who spoke at all, now spoke to the whole company; and the next party you happen to belong to, you will observe how very silent this makes the most eloquent of the talkers to

* *Qu.* Phidian?

twos or threes. For my own part, though not overburdened with the vice of modesty, I declare if, by any chance, I am overtaken by an unexpected calm in the conversation, in the middle of a sentence addressed to my next neighbour, I find great difficulty in bringing it to a conclusion. There ought to be some general rules laid down for the regulation of these matters,—that in a party of more than twelve it shall be highly penal for the eleven who have been busily talking to stop short all of a sudden, and turn their two-and-twenty eyes upon a blushing, hammering blockhead like myself, who was merely humdrumming some nonsense into the ear of his friend. On the other hand, it ought to be punishable with salt and water, or even with expulsion, for any one, unless duly qualified, to seize the ears of a whole party. If there are only five or six of you, you must yield as gracefully as you can to your fate, and listen—but even then only in his turn—to the braying of the most atrocious donkey; but if your number reaches even the youngest of the teens, let no man monopolise the conversation unless you be so minded. Cough, hem, shuffle, speak against him as if for a wager; and if none of all these hints will satisfy the proser, take up a decanter—an empty one of course—and fracture his *os frontis*. No jury would give more than a farthing damages, when they were made aware of the provocation. There is also another plan, not so certain as the decanter, but still one which rarely fails, and that is, to insist on the orator delivering the rest of his dissertation on his legs. It is wonderful what good effects I have seen result from this. The floweriest talker becomes dumb the moment he leaves his chair—the story expires in an unintelligible succession of hums and has; and, in fact, I have so often seen the instantaneous cessation of all the powers of prosing on the relinquishment of the seat, that I *have* for a long time believed there is some mysterious connexion between oratory and the portion of the body for which chairs were intended. These remarks come in most admirably just now, because they are not at all applicable to the glorious Colonel O'Looney. At all times, and in all positions, he was equally delightful. Sometimes, I have no doubt, he was less amusing than others; sometimes rather

dull, and sometimes—for the truth is not to be concealed—he was as stupid as any red-coated biped in the service; but at all times his conversation was welcome—at all times listened to without a murmur. O beautiful effects of a temper like his, perpetually good, and of a disposition overflowing with kindness! For, after all, bad as some sour-faced hypocrites pronounce our human nature, how uniformly do we make allowance for the imperfections of the brave, the generous, the good, and give to benevolence, integrity, and friendship what we deny to rank or riches, or even to wit!

"And pray, did any of you boys iver live in a boording-house?" said the colonel, looking round the table with an eye that told us he wanted no answer to his question, but that it was just his way of beginning one of his adventures. "Not a bad sort of place at all, I can tell you, a fashionable boording-house, whin the landliddy knows what's what, and keeps up the cridit of her establishment."

"Keeps up the credit, colonel? gives tick, you mean?"

"I mane no sich thing, Harry Verner; and I fine you a bumper,—that is to say, you'll send round the bottle without helping yourself, for interrupting me in the very beginning of my story. The first leave of absence I iver had from the regiment I spint at a very genteel boording-house, in a street, but I forget the name of it, running out of Bedford Square. The landliddy, who had once been a beauty, presided at her table as if she had been the Queen of Love, attinded by a strong detachment of smiles and glances, not forgetting a prodigious accompaniment of airs and graces. Niver was sich bowing and winking, and all manner of other polite attintions, as she bestowed upon me. I really began to think she saw something mighty particular in my handsome countenance; but, thought I, if she is such a fool as to take a fancy to me, it's none of my fault, and she's amazingly welcome, it she don't force me to fall in love with her in return. But the ould beauty had no intintion of the sort. If any body was in love with her at all, it was two whiteheaded ould fellows who regularly flanked her every day at dinner, and made fine speeches to her as she was hilping them to the very best pieces of the fish. One of these ould men was General Sim,

and the other Field-marshal Snook, in the service, he told us, of the Electoral Prince of Hesse. We were a very distinguished company, I assure you; and when I compared myself with the lofty people I met there, I began to be confoundedly sorry I was not in the service of the Prince of Hesse myself. What was a poor cornet compared to a field-marshal and a general? We had ladies of the party too,—some old and some young; but all, according to our landliddy's account, the daughters and cousins of the nobility. I am not at all sure that the King keeps half such aristocratic company as sat down to table every day in the boording-house of Mrs Maples. And capital fun we had in spite of all our grandeur,—every one found his own wine; and although the military grandees on the right and left of the landliddy were prodigiously dignified, it was astonishing how condescendingly they joined me in flooring as much good port as I chose to order, after they had finished a half pint of Cape, which was their joint-stock allowance after the cloth was drawn. They drank amazingly, especially the field-marshal, and I perceived I was rapidly getting into his favour. At last, one day, he told me that he really took a great interest in my fortunes, and would give me a hint that might make a man of me for life. 'Oh,' says I, 'any thing you plase. I'm nineteen years of age, and six feet two without my shoes, so let us have the hint you mention as early as possible.'

"'Oh, it's only a slight idea I have in my head. Have you observed a very elegant looking young lady along with the Honourable Mrs Snaggs?'

"'What; the pale-faced cretur with the sort of squint in her eye?'

"'She *has* an agreeable cast—you've observed her? Well, mum's the word; forty thousand down, 'pon honour, and immense interest at the Horse-Guards besides.'

"'How?'

"'Why, you see, her father, Honourable Tom—fine fellow as ever walked—poor—proud—high blood—low pocket—married city heiress—lots of money—tobacconist somewhere in the east.—Dash for a while—horse races—turf—opera. Stop, says the old tobacconist,—no more of the rhino. My

friend—he was a friend of mine—the Honourable Tom—pulled up just in time to keep in with old Pigtail—lived steady—politics—bought some boroughs—obliged the duke—Pigtail died—lots of coin—Honourable Tom off like a rocket again—squandered immensely—drank—caught cold—died—we must all die—and left this one child—widow—interest at the Horse-Guards and all—poor Tom!'

"All the time the field-marshal was bolting out these sentences, he kept constantly pulling away at my bottle; and as example is always very infectious, so did I, till the divil a drop was left in the half-dozen I had ordered. That night at tea you can have no idea of the attintions that were lavished on me by Mrs Maples and the Honourable Mrs Snaggs. The field-marshal was loud in my praises, for the quantity he had drunk made him particularly eloquent. I heard him saying to the widow, 'fine fellow, Captain O'Looney—long line of noble ancestors—kings of Ireland long ago. Uncle of his, Terence O'Looney—friend of mine—commanded a corps of observation on the Rhine—fine fellow—fifty thousand men—fell on him unawares—heavy Bavarians—what could he do—sword in hand—died beside me—noble soldier!'

"Mrs Maples the landliddy sat on the other side of the widow, and chimed in whenever there was a pause in the Hessian commander's not very continuous discourse—'Very gentlemanly young man, indeed—I consider myself particularly lucky in so very select a party of gentlemen. We are always very select in this establishment. Captain O'Looney, I hear, is very rich. General Sim says he has heard of the great O'Looney estates—very well-informed man, General Sim—very.' By some means or other, what with nudging some to leave one seat, and some to make vacant another, it so happened that I found myself sitting cheek-by-jowl with the interesting young lady with the squint, and the influence at the Horse-Guards. It struck me that all these fine speeches about myself might just as well have been spoken out of ear-shot; but a young fellow is not very particular on these points, especially after three bottles of port-wine. There were Miss Snaggs and I fairly seated together on a sofa,—a good way removed from the other people, and it

isn't everybody's luck, I can assure you, to be left side by side with forty thousand pounds. The young lady sat as quiet as a mouse, and in those days I was no great hand at small talk, even after dinner. Up to this very hour I think it is a most appalling service to begin a conversation with a lady that you have never seen before. But for my part I was always confoundedly modest, and I am afraid it is too late for me to improve. But my two military friends, and especially the generalissimo of the Hessian armies, came very opportunely to my assistance, and proposed, as we had had a most agreeable evening down stairs, that the ladies should participate a little in our enjoyments. Mrs Maples took the hint in a moment, and ordered tumblers and other appliances into the drawingroom. Emboldened by all these preparations, I recovered from my *mauvaise honte*, and turned to my cross-eyed companion with a look of as much admiration as a vision of the Horse-Guards enabled me to assume.

"'And, pray, madam,' says I, 'what's your opinion of a glass of brandy and water?'

"'Particlar comfitable'—minced the lady.

"'Och then and you're a very sinsible young liddy as iver I met in my life.'

"'Captain O'Looney,' interrupted the Honourable Mrs Snaggs, 'you're overpoweringly amusing; Adelinda is quite delighted with your remarks.'

"'Quite charming, I do declare,' said Mrs Maples, pretending to conceal a laugh.

"'Ah! wild dog—wild dog,' said the field-marshal.—'All the O'Looneys—wild—witty—polite—just like his uncle Terence commanding on the Rhine—funny rogue—poor Terence!'

"In the mean time we had set to rather ferociously on the tipple, and, for a lady of her polished manners, I never met with the equal of Mrs Snaggs in the art of cocking her finger. A good stout rummer seemed a mere plaything in her hand. It disappeared like winking, as the vulgar say, or as some poet or other tells us—

> "Or like the snow flakes in the river,
> A moment seen, then melt for ever."

I sat all this time next to the heiress, and it is really wonderful what effect an extra tumbler or two have in adding to the charms of beauty. Bacchus and Venus are surely brother and sister, and a very pleasant family they are. Well—I had no bashfulness now, but made as great a fool of myself as was to be expected. The squint of my right-hand neighbour had disappeared, and no wonder, for the divil a bit could I see whether she had any eyes at all. I just saw when I looked at her that there was certainly a face surmounted with a cap, but by this time I had lost all perception of the features of which the countenance was composed. I felt certain she was amazingly beautiful, and had every reason to conclude she was, like her mother, amazingly thirsty. But, however, such enjoyments as these can't last for ever. The old lady on my left became very talkative; so did the general, and so did my worthy friend the commander-in-chief. The ladies at length left us, and how long after that we continued our potations it is impossible to say. All I recollect of the matter is, that on bundling up stairs to my bedroom I pushed against somebody on the landing. There was a sort of scream—out went my candle—and after a great deal of palaver with the person, whoever it was I had encountered, I suppose I found my way to my chamber, for I wakened in bed next morning with a total forgetfulness of every thing that had occurred.

"Before I had well-finished dressing, the Field-Marshal of Hesse entered my room.

"'Well, my boy,' he said, 'you've captured the citadel in glorious style. Ah,—I remember—on the Rhine—castle here—our camp there—no bustle with guns—no trenches—lines—circumvallations—word given—assault—off we go—up the hill—over the wall—into the market-place—flag on ramparts—the city's ours, hurra!—Egad, you carried the Honourable Miss Snaggs by a *coup-de-main*. And as to her mother'——

"'She was carried too, I suppose, for she's the divil and all at squeezing the soul out of a brandy bottle.'

"'Amiable woman the Honourable Mrs Snaggs,' replied the commander—'weak health—stomachic affection—recom-

mended by her physician—but come, breakfast is waiting—" happy happy pair, none but the brave, none but the brave —none but the brave deserve the fair."'

"The ould fellow went down stairs roaring this at the top of his lungs, and certainly when I entered the parlour you'd have thought something very wonderful had happened. All the party had their eyes turned to me with such a funny expression, that I began to fancy I had really performed some very astonishing achievement the night before. A chair had been kept for me next to Miss Snaggs, into which I was handed with a great deal of ceremony by the two old warriors. The young lady kept her eyes firmly fixed on the table-cloth, and as I concluded from this that she was rather ashamed of her tippling performances of the night before, I resolved to spare her blushes, and not say a word upon the subject. Her mother was not at table.

"'The Honourable Mrs Snaggs,' said Mrs Maples to me, 'will join us very soon. She is scarcely equal to meeting us so early.'

"'No,' says I, 'it is scarcely to be expected.'

"'Last night was a very trying one to her nerves.'

"'Not a doubt of it,' says I—'my own hand is not so steady this morning as it ought to be.'

"'There, Miss Adelinda, there's a confession for you. Are you yourself quite free from tremors after so agitating an evening?'

"'I endeavour to overcome my trepidation as much as possible,' replied Miss Adelinda. 'But it is very natural in one so young, and in my peculiarly delicate situation.'

"'What is natural, Miss Snaggs?' says I.

"'Why, that I should feel particlar uncomfitable.'

"'Ah! I daresay you do,' says I; 'but you'll be more up to such things by the time you're as practised a hand at it as your mother.'

"General Sim, who was usually rather a silent member of the company, here joined in the conversation.

"'Mrs Snaggs is certainly more accustomed to such occurrences than her daughter. When we look at her countenance we can't be surprised at it happening every night.'

"'Ah, very true,' says I; 'she bears the marks of it in her face.'

"'Do you really think so?' says the general.

"'I'faith I do—I never saw a more tell-tale countenance in my life.'

"'She certainly is a lovely woman—of the most delicate feelings; and I assure you, Captain O'Looney, last night she was completely overcome.'

"'So I expected,' says I; 'but, upon my soul, 'tis too bad to be telling all these things before people in this way. There should be no tales out of school.'

"'Right,' says the field-marshal—'mum's the word. In things of that sort it is cursedly indelicate to blab.'

"When we were all going on in this free-and-easy way, talking over our dissipation, as I thought, of the night before, a message came to me that Mrs Snaggs would be happy to see me in her dressing-room.

"'The divil!' says I, 'what does the ould liddy want with me there?'

"'Mum's the word,' said the field-marshal—'family secrets. Ah! what would the Honourable Tom have said if he had lived? Great fortune the O'Looneys. Poor Terence—commanded on the Rhine.'

"In the mean time I had followed the servant up stairs, and was ushered into a small room, which was only big enough to hold a sofa and a chair. Mrs Snaggs was lying gracefully extended on the sofa, and motioned me to sit down beside her. By the powers! thinks I, this is rather serious. There's no saying what this tippling ould woman manes to be after. However, down I sat, and she began—

"'You are not surprised, my dear O'Looney, at my having sent for you here?'

"'Och, not the least,' says I—'how do you find yourself this morning?'

"'Agitated, of course. But, my dear friend, it is high time to proceed to business. You are an Irishman?'

"'How the divil did you find it out?'

"'You are the head of the family of the O'Looneys?'

"'Like enough,' says I.

" ' And hold, of course, the possessions of the name ?'

" ' To be sure.'

" ' Then, my dear Captain O'Looney, I accept you with all my heart.'

" When she said this she laid hold of my hand, and squeezed it as if it had been a lemon.

" ' Indeed !' said I, ' then, by my faith, you're one of the jolliest old women I ever met with—and what will you do with me after you have accepted me ?'

" ' Do with you !—after your declarations last night on the landing—we shall send for a special license immediately.'

" ' On the landing !—And was it you I fell in with on my way to bed last night ?'

" ' Oh no—my feelings had overcome me before, but my daughter has told me all.'

" ' Ah, what did she tell ye ?' says I, ' for, upon my word, I've forgotten every syllable.'

" ' Sir !—forgotten !—these are but poor subterfuges. I hold you bound to me by a regular promise, and of course you will break it at your peril.'

" ' A promise of what ?' says I.

" ' Of marriage,' said she. ' But my friend General Sim will explain it to you better than I can.'

" ' The deuce he will !' says I. ' Then you may tell General Sim, that if he says a word to me about marrying such a funny, foolish, ould liddy, I'll break every bone in his body, and shoot him into the bargain.'

" I left the ould woman when I said this, and walked down into the breakfast parlour. The whole party were there still, with the exception of General Sim.

" ' Here's a pretty piece of business,' said I ; ' Mrs Maples, the ould liddy up stairs has not recovered from the effects of last night's punch yet.'

" ' Sir !' said the landliddy, ' I don't understand your allusions—the honour of this establishment'——

" ' Is all in my eye,' said I ; ' and as to marrying any of the party—as ould Mrs Snaggs wishes me to do—I have no intintion of the sort, I assure ye.'

" Here Miss Adelinda gave a faint shriek, and squinted at me with all her might.

" ' Have you no regard for the young lady's feelings?' said Mrs Maples. ' How do you feel, miss?'

" ' Particlar uncomfitable,' replied the young liddy, and was quietly marched out of the room by Mrs Maples.

" ' Hem—hem—mum's the word,' said the field-marshal—' in general cases—but really, poz—this is a peculiar case—you must marry the lady.'

" ' What is it you mane, old man?' said I, for I was now in a mortal passion.

" ' You must marry the lady—or—hem—the friends of the family will demand satisf'——

" ' Is it satisfaction they're after? With all the pleasure in life,' says I. ' I'll shoot the whole batch, tobacconists, honourables, and all!'

" ' Hem—mum's the word'—said the field-marshal, as he slunk out of the room. ' I shall certainly mention what you have said to General Sim. Brave man General Sim—excellent shot.'

" In about half an hour, when I was busily packing up my trunk, a tap came to my door, and on opening it the field-marshal stept into the room with a very dignified expression on his prodigious features.

" ' Servant, Captain O'Looney—sorry—very—to be messenger—hostile message—hem—mum's the word in matters of war—General Sim, angry at shameful conduct—satisfaction—pistols to-morrow morning, or marry the lady.'

" ' I'll meet him with all my heart,' said I; ' and I didn't give him credit for being so much of a gentleman; for between ourselves—mum's the word, as you say, among friends—curse me if I didn't believe that if he was a general at all he was a general dealer, and that your connexion with the Hessians arose from your being a maker of Hessian boots."

" ' Hell—the devil—boots! what do you mean?'

" ' Very little. most noble field-marshal; but if you have delivered your message, and got your answer, I advise you to be off before I can say Jack Robinson, or I'll kick you over

the bannisters, though you had the principality of Hesse on your back.'

"'Kick!—bannisters! you shall answer—but mum's the word.'

"It was the finest fun in the world to see the field-marshal's fright; but how was I to get a second—for not a single soul in all London did I know that I could apply to, and there was no time to send to the regiment.

"I was quite disconsolate on account of this misfortune, but at last I bethought me that as all things were to be had in London, either for love or money, if I could not get the assistance of a friend in any other way, I would hire one. Now at the Ould Slaughter's Hotel, where I had dined once or twice, there was a divilish bluff jolly looking ould fellow of a waiter—I knew him, by the cast of his eye and the size of his calf, to be an Irishman; so I accordingly betook myself to St Martin's lane, and entered into a conversation with my friend Joe. It was agreed that, in consideration of five guineas, Joe should sport himself as a gentleman next morning, and accompany me as my second to Battersea fields. Things were arranged entirely to my satisfaction. I gave Joe a crown to regale himself with in the mean time, and went back again to the boording-house to make a final settlement with my friend Mrs Maples.

"On going into her private parlour, she received me with the haughtiest manner she could put on.

"'Ah, Captain O'Looney, you have broken the heart of a dear innocent susceptible creature.'

"'Pray, madam,' says I, 'who is the injured liddy you allude to?'

"'Miss Snaggs.'

"'Are you sure it's miss? for, 'pon my soul, I fancied it was the ould liddy.'

"'How can you say so, sir? Mrs Snaggs is a widow, oppressed with the loss of the best of husbands,—and the young liddy, the dear sweet charming Adelinda'——

"——'Is rather partial, like her mamma, to a comfortable nightcap.'

"'A nightcap, sir?'

"'Yes, and a divil of a strong one, too—half and half, and not a thimbleful less.'

"'Really, Mr O'Looney, 'tis too bad to take advantage of a lady having admitted you to her dressing-room, to quiz the particulars of her head-dress.'

"But it's useless going through the whole of our conversation. I paid her all she demanded, except a trifling compensation she said she expected for my being in all probability the cause of her losing such distinguished members of her establishment as the Honourable Mrs Snaggs and her daughter. 'And the property of the family, you are aware, Captain O'Looney'——

"'Is very large, indeed,' said I, 'and lies next to the O'Looney estates, which were left to me by General Terence, my uncle, who served under Field-Marshal Snook on the Rhine. Och, our properties, I suspect, are pretty much on a par; but if any of the ould snobs that live in this boording-house of yours have any thing farther to say to me, tell them I am to be found at the Ould Slaughter's, and so good day to ye, ma'am.'

"Nothing occurred that night. My friend Joe the waiter seemed quite to understand the business I wished to employ him on, and I went very comfortably to bed, determined to shoot ould Sim through the liver for being such a Tom Noddy as to think I believed any of his lies and balderdash.

"Next morning at peep of day I was up and in the coffee-room. My second had figged himself out in his Sunday clothes, and such a divil of a buck had never been heard of since the days of Adam. He had on a pair of the tightest fitting buckskins you ever saw, that pinched him so cursedly at the joint, that he walked without even daring to bend the knee, exactly as if his legs had been two straight stout pieces of wood. His top-boots were knowingly wrinkled almost down to the ankle, leaving about a foot of the calf of his leg sticking out like an enormous Yorkshire pudding tied in at both ends. Before proceeding to the field, he continued his professional avocations, and brought me a dish of coffee, in which, by some mistake, I suppose, he had emptied a noggin of brandy instead of milk. While I was drinking it, and

waiting for the coach, Joe employed himself very busily in setting the coffeeroom in order. He scrubbed the tables, brushed the floor; and while we were both thus employed, we did not perceive the entrance of my honourable friend the field-marshal.

"'Servant, Captain O'Looney.—Unpleasant business this—hate blood—come from friend the general to see if you won't compromise.'

"'What do you mean by a compromise?' said I.

"'Why, if you won't marry lady, make some compensation—feelings acute—wounded sensibility—five hundred pounds or so.'

"'Who told you to say all this?'

"'General Sim. Brave man General Sim.'

"'Then, I'll give you my honour as a gentleman, the moment I've shot your friend the general, I'll run a ball into your body, you miserable braggadocio old scoundrel.'

"At this moment my friend Joe, who had been rummaging in the bar, came out, looking as fierce as a lion.

"'Botheration,' says Joe, 'what's the meaning of this? The coach is just coming up the lane, and we'll finish the jewel directly.'

"He looked at the field-marshal as he said this, but suddenly I remarked a great change in his countenance. He broke into an immoderate fit of laughter, held out his hand to the Commander-in-Chief of the Hessian armies, and said, 'Master Snook, don't you know me, now I'm drest so fine?'

"It was still grey dawn, and the coffeeroom is none of the lightest in the world. The field-marshal looked at Joe, and seemed amazingly puzzled.

"'This is my second, sir,' said I. 'Let me introduce you. Field-Marshal Snook, Mr Joseph'——

"'Coming, sir,' said Joe.

"'Mr Joseph Cumming; now that you are acquainted, you will settle matters as speedily as possible, for I am anxious to have a shot at both of them.'

"'And is it with Master Snook you are going to fight? Faith, jewelling's come to a purty pass, if you're going to give a meeting to a carcass butcher.'

"'A carcass butcher!' said I.

"'A carcass butcher!' cried the field-marshal—'what do you mean?'

"'Just that you was once a carcass butcher, till you failed, and left a good score agin your name in master's books, I can tell ye. Don't ye know me now, Master Snook?'

"'A carcass butcher!' said I.—'Well, that's the best name I ever heard in my life for a generalissimo. But carcass butcher or not, let us be off, and have a slap at General Sim.'

"'Why,' said Master Snook, in a very penitent tone, 'mum's the word—Sim is waiting at the door—business carried far enough—shake hands—friends—no shooting.'

"'No, no,' said I; 'you've got me out of my bed in the middle of the night, and I won't let you or the other ould vagabond off without a little amusement. Fight me you must.'

"'Why—hem—no offence, I hope—did all for the best—Sim's fault.'

"'Who the devil is Sim?'

"'Mrs Snaggs' husband.'

"'And who are you?'

"'Mrs Maples' husband.'

"'And what did you want to make of me?'

"'Miss Snaggs' husband.'

"'Och, and that's your plan, is it? Then may the divil fly away with me if I ever say a civil word to a young woman in a boording-house.'

"And there was an end, gentlemen, of my duel with a general and a field-marshal. Joseph won his five guineas; and all I can say is, never trust yourselves in a lodging-house when you can get into a hotel. Boots never tries to inveigle you into a marriage."

I don't recollect whether any more stories were told that night or not. We had a great deal of fun; and I thought, when I got up next morning, and tippled my first bottle of soda-water, what a pity it is that a friend can't show his hospitality unless by deluging you with wine—people are always so wise and sententious in the morning. I could draw a fine moral, if I chose it, from all the rigmarole I have written. I am quite certain there is a moral to be found in it; and if you can't find it out, the worse luck for you.

THE

TRAVELLER IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

In a neat and comfortable cottage in the picturesque village of Bastock, lived a middle-aged gentleman of the name of Samuel Holt. The clean white paling in front of the beautiful little flower-garden before his door showed he was a man of taste, while the coach-house and stables at the side showed that he might also be considered a man of fortune. He was in truth in very comfortable circumstances. He had a considerable quantity of land—let to a respectable tenant, for he himself knew nothing about farming—and the rest of his property consisted in about fifteen thousand pounds, which was lent on mortgage to a very wealthy baronet. Mr Holt might have altogether somewhere about a thousand a-year. He spent it in the true style of old English hospitality. His house was never empty; friends, when they came, were so kindly treated, that they found it extremely inconvenient to go away;—and what with coursings in the morning, comfortable dinners, pleasant companions, and extraordinary port-wine, Mr Samuel Holt was the happiest fellow in the world. His outward man was in exact correspondence to his internal tranquillity. He was stout, but not unwieldy; there was not a wrinkle on his brow; a fine open expression animated his countenance, and there was such a glorious ruddy hue of health upon his cheek, that his friends talked of him by no other name than Rosy Sam.

"Well, my boys," said Rosy Sam, one fine September evening after dinner, "we'll drink our noble selves—I don't think I ever shot better in my life."

"Your second bird was beautifully managed," said Jack Thomson; "I never saw any gun carry so far except once in Turkey, when the Reis Effendi shot a sea-mew at a hundred and fifty yards."

"With a long bow, I suppose," said Rosy Sam, who disbelieved every story, the scene of which was not laid in England.

"No, with a long brass gun which went upon wheels."

"Well, well," replied Sam, "it may be all very true; but, thank God, I never saw, and never expect to see, any of them foreign parts."

"You may live to see half the world yet; and if I were inclined to be a prophet, I should say you will be a very great traveller before you die."

"I'd sooner be tried for murder."

"You may be both."

This last was said so solemnly, that Rosy Sam almost changed colour. He passed it off with a laugh, and the conversation went on upon other subjects connected with Thomson's travels. All the evening, however, the prophetic announcement seemed to stick in poor Sam's throat, and when the party was about to separate for the night, holding the bed-candle in his hand, and assuming a degree of gravity which can only be produced by an extra bottle, he said, "I'll tell you what it is, Jack, here in this cottage have I lived, man and boy, for two-and-forty years. I never was out of the county in my life, and the farthest from home I ever was, was three-and-thirty miles. If you mean to say that I am to be a traveller in my old age, the Lord have mercy on me, for a helpless dog should I be among the foreignarians—fellows that can't speak a word of English to save their souls, poor devils—but poh! poh! man, you can't be serious."

"I am serious as a bishop, I assure you. You will travel for several years."

"Poh! nonsense! I'll be hanged if I do—so, good-night." The party laughed at Sam's alarm; and retired to bed.

All that night Sam's dreams were of ships and coaches. He thought he was wrecked and half drowned, then that he was upset and had his legs broken by the hind wheel. He

woke in a tremendous fright, for he fancied he was on the top of one of the pyramids, and could not get down again. He thought he had been on the pinnacle for several days, that he was nearly dying of thirst and hunger,—and, on starting up, he found it was time to rise; so he hurried down stairs with the utmost expedition, as he was nearly famished for his breakfast. He was met at the breakfast parlour door by his old servant, Trusty Tommy, who gave him a letter, and said, "This here letter is just come from Mr Clutchit the attorney. His man says as how there must be an answer immediately, so I was just a comin' up to call ye."

"You would have found me knocking about the pyramids," said Rosy Sam, as he proceeded to open the letter.

"Fie for shame!" muttered old Trusty, "to make use of such an expression. Ah! as good Mr Drawline says"—

"Devil take you and Mr Drawline—Saddle the Curate this instant, and tell the gentlemen, when they come down, that I am forced to set off on business, but that I shall certainly be back to dinner."

In the utmost haste, and with no very pleasant expression, he managed to swallow three or four eggs, nearly a loaf of bread, and half a dozen cups of tea. His horse was soon at the door; he set off at a hand gallop, and left old Trusty Tommy with his mouth open, wondering what in the world it could be that induced his master to such unusual expedition. The motive was indeed a serious one. Mr Clutchit had discovered that there was a prior mortgage over the estate upon which poor Sam's fifteen thousand was advanced, and their great object now was to get the mortgage transferred to some unencumbered security. The seven miles which intervened between the lawyer and his client were soon passed over. Hot and breathless, our poor friend, who was now more rosy than ever, rushed into the business-room of Mr Clutchit. That gentleman, however, was nowhere to be found. On his table Sam saw a note directed to himself—he opened it, and found the following words:—"Dear sir,—By the strangest good luck I have this moment heard that Sir Harry is at present in London. I lose not a moment, as the coach is just starting, to obtain an interview with him

there, and should strongly recommend your following by the eleven o'clock coach. Indeed your presence is indispensably necessary. I shall only have the start of you by two hours. —Your obedient servant, J. C."

Sam threw himself into a chair in an agony of grief and wonder.

"That infernal fellow, Jack Thomson," he moaned out, "is certainly more than human. They say they learn wonderful things abroad. He has learned the second sight. Little did I think two days ago, that I should ever have to hurry so far away from home. London must be seventy miles off at least—oh Lord! oh Lord! quite out of my own dear county—what is to become of me!"

While indulging in this moralising fit, the coach drove up to the door—Sam mounted, almost unconscious of what he did, and was whirled off before he had time to recover from his reverie. On arriving in London, night was rapidly closing in. The house where the coach stopt was a very neat comfortable sort of hostelry in the City, and our honest friend, before proceeding to any other business, solaced himself with the best dinner the bill of fare would allow. After refreshing himself with a solitary pint of port, he set out in search of Mr Clutchit. But where to find that gentleman was the difficulty; he had left no address in his note to his client, and the people of the inn could not tell where the nine o'clock coach went to in London. They recommended him, however, to apply at various inns—the Dragon, the Swan, the Bull-and-Mouth, and a variety of other great coach caravanseries, the very names of which were utterly unknown to the unsophisticated Sam. Away, however, he went, in total ignorance of his way, and much too independent and magnanimous to ask it. First, one street was traversed, then another, and at last poor Sam was entirely lost. His great object now was to retrace his steps; but one turning was so like another, that he could not distinguish those by which he had come, and in the midst of his perplexity, he recollected that he had forgotten to take notice of the name of the inn at which he had dined, and of course could not ask any one he

met to tell him his way to it. Tired out by his day's exertions, and very much dispirited, he resolved to go into the first house of entertainment he came to, and resume his search early in the morning. He accordingly went into the next inn that presented itself. He took particular pains this time to impress its name upon his memory. The Cabbage Leaf was the sign of this tavern, and it was situated at the top of one of those narrow little streets in the neighbourhood of the Tower. Honest Sam, it will be seen, had travelled in the wrong direction; but now he was too much harassed and wearied to recover his mistake. On going into the bar, he was told by the bustling little landlady that he might have a bed; but they were really so full, that he must submit to share his room with another gentleman. Sam comforted himself with the reflection, that necessity has no law, and consented to the arrangement. After a Welsh rabbit, and a glass or two of brandy and water, he was shown to his apartment. His fellow-lodger came into the room nearly at the same time, and Sam was somewhat pleased to see he was of a very decent exterior. They entered into conversation, and his new acquaintance promised, from his knowledge of the town, to be of considerable use in furthering Sam's enquiries after Mr Clutchit. He, however, told him, that he had some business to transact very early in the morning, and took the precaution on these occasions, especially in the winter, of shaving at night. He accordingly proceeded to shave himself; but poor Sam was so fatigued, that he fell asleep before he had finished the operation. On awaking next morning, he looked to his companion's bed, but it was empty. He had told him, however, that he should rise very early, so he was not surprised at his absence. On getting up, and searching for his inexpressibles, they were nowhere to be found. In their place, he discovered those of his late companion; and after many strange surmises, and coming at last to the conclusion that he was robbed, he quietly slipt them on, and proceeded down stairs. His watch he had luckily put under his pillow, and there had not been above two pounds in his pockets; he found a few shillings in an old purse, a penknife, two keys, and a set of very fine teeth,

carefully fitted up, and apparently never used, in the pocket of the habiliments which were left. These circumstances staggered him as to the predatory habits of his companion; and he resolved to say nothing on the subject, as he had still some hopes of the stranger's making his appearance as he had promised, and clearing up the mystery. He waited some time after breakfast with this expectation; and at last telling the landlady he should be back at a certain hour, he went out in hopes of falling in with his companion on the street. He walked down towards the river, and gazed with astonishment on the innumerable shipping. Wondering more and more at the strangeness and immensity of the scene, he thought of returning to where he had slept. Just as he was leaving the river, he saw several men go into one of the barges, and begin dragging the shallow part of the water. "What are those men after?" said Sam to a person who stood watching them.

"They be draggin' for the body of a gentleman as was murdered last night, and the folks thinks that he was mayhap thrown into the river."

"Dreadful!" said Sam, turning pale at the horrid supposition. "I hope they won't find it; it would be the death of me." And shuddering lest they should pull up a mangled body in his sight, he rushed from the spot. On reaching the inn, he entered it, and was going into the bar, when two stout men rushed upon him, the landlady crying "That's the man," and threw him down with all their force. One held him by the throat, while the other handcuffed him in a moment. They then hustled him out of the house, forced him into a hackney-coach, and drove off at an amazing pace.

Sam was so much astonished at the rapidity of the whole transaction, that he could scarcely summon breath to ask his conductors what they meant. At last he said, "What the devil can be the meaning of all this? Is this the way to treat a country gentleman?"

"How bloody well he sports the Johnnie," said one of the men to the other, without attending to Sam's questions. "He'll queer the beaks if the tide stands his friend, and rolls off the stiffun."

"No, there ben't no chance of that," responded the other, "for they've set-to so soon with the drags. I'll bet a gallon of gin to a pint o' purl, he dies in his shoes, with his ears stuffed with Cotton."

"Do you mean me, you scoundrel?" cried Sam, who did not quite understand them, but perceived that they spoke of him rather disrespectfully.

"Come, come, master, none of your hard words; we aint such scoundrels as to Burke our bedfellow, howsomever."

At this moment, at the corner of a street, Sam saw Mr Clutchit hurrying as if on very urgent business. He pushed his head out of the window and hollo'd—"Clutchit, Clutchit! Here's a pretty go!" and held out his manacled hands. But his companions pulled him forcibly back, and he did not know whether his attorney had perceived him or not.

Soon after this the coach stopt at a dingy-looking house with iron gratings before the windows. "We gets out here, my covey," said one of the men, "but I dare say we shall join company again on our way to Newgate."

"You insulting scoundrel," said Sam, "I hope never to see your ugly face again."

"No, nor Jack Ketch's neither,—but mizzle, mizzle, I say—his worship's been waiting this hour."

They then proceeded into a dark room which was crowded with people. They all made way for Sam and his two conductors, till they stood directly in front of three gentlemen in comfortable arm-chairs.

"Call the first witness," said one of the gentlemen, and immediately appeared the bustling little landlady of the Cabbage Leaf.

"Is that the man who slept in your house last night?"

"It is, your worship, and little did I think such a bloody-minded villain"——

"Hush! answer only to the questions that are put to you—about what o'clock was it when he came to your house?"

"About ten o'clock, the rascal"——

Here Sam, whose astonishment now gave place to rage and indignation, started up, and said to the magistrates,

"Harkee, gentlemen, I'll be hanged if I don't make you pay for this. How dare you"——

"Officers, look close to the prisoner," said one of their worships. "I recommend you, prisoner, to say nothing till the examination is concluded." And Sam sat down again, wondering where all this would end.

"You say the prisoner came to your house about ten o'clock—had you any conversation with him?"

"No, your worship; he only had his supper and two glasses of brandy and water."

"He then went to bed?"

"Yes; I showed him up to number nine."

"Was it a single-bedded room?"

"No, there were two beds in it."

"Describe its situation."

"It is just at the top of the first stair, which fronts the side door into the lane."

"Could that door be opened without waking the house?"

"Yes; we never keep it closed with more than a latch, 'cause of the watermen getting quietly down to the river."

"Was the other bed in the same room occupied?"

"Yes; a gentleman slept in it."

"You saw no more of the prisoner that night. Well, in the morning, when did you see him?"

"He came down to breakfast, but seemed very low and uneasy."

"Did he say any thing to you about his companion?"

"Yes; he sighed, and said he was sure he would never come back."

"When did he leave the house?"

"He went down towards the river in about half an hour."

"Very well; you may stand down. Call the next witness."

The chambermaid made her appearance.

"On going into the prisoner's room this morning, what did you see?"

"Nothing particular at first; but in a little I thought the beds and carpet more tumbled than usual. I looked into the other gentleman's bed, and there I saw the sheets and pil-

low marked with blood."—(Here the witness turned very faint).

"Well, did you give the alarm?"

"Yes; I ran down and told missus—but the prisoner had gone out."

"What did you do?"

"We told all the lodgers, and asked if they had heard any noise. One of them, John Chambers, heard heavy steps on the stair."

"Well, we shall examine John Chambers himself."

John Chambers, on being examined, said that about three or four in the morning, he heard heavy steps coming down the stair, as if of a man carrying a great weight; the side door into the lane was opened, and the person went out. He watched for some time, and heard a stealthy pace going up stairs again; after which he fell asleep, as his suspicions were quieted by the person's return.

A witness next appeared, who deposed that, having an appointment with Abraham Reeve, the person supposed to be murdered, he proceeded to the Cabbage Leaf, and found it all in an uproar at the suspected murder. Abraham Reeve was by profession a dentist; and had that morning fixed to furnish the witness with a handsome set of ivories.

"Please your worship," said one of the officers who had conducted the unfortunate Samuel to the office, "on searching the prisoner, we found this here in his breeches pocket;" and saying this, he held up a complete set of false teeth.

The magistrates upon this shook their heads, and a thrill went through the court, as if the murder were transacted before their eyes. The purse also was recognised by the landlady; and even the evidence of the person whom Sam had addressed by the side of the river, when they were dragging for the corpse, told very much against him. That witness stated, that the prisoner turned very pale when he saw what they were about; and after seeming excessively agitated for a long while, had said, as if unconsciously, "It will be death to me if they find him." The evidence, by various concurring circumstances, was very strong against our unfortunate friend. The magistrate cautioned him against saying any

thing to criminate himself; and asked him if he wished to make any observation before being remanded on suspicion. Thus adjured, Rosy Sam, who was, alas! now no longer rosy, essayed to speak.

"Upon my honour, this is a most curious business. All that I know about the matter is, that the man who slept in my room must have got up very early in the morning, and stolen my breeches. I am a man of fortune—my name is Samuel Holt, Esq. of Bastock Lodge—and as to stealing"—

But his harangue was here interrupted by a new witness, who exclaimed, "Please your worships, this swindler of a fellow cheated me last night out of an excellent dinner and a pint of old port." And poor Sam, on looking round at his new assailant, recognised the landlord of the inn where the coach had stopt. Casting his eyes up to Heaven in sheer despair, he sat down in his seat, and muttered, "It is my firm belief I shall be hanged, because a cursed fellow of a dentist took a fancy to my breeches. But it all comes of travelling. May the devil take Jack Thomson!" But at this moment a prospect of safety dawned upon him, for Mr Clutchit entered the office.

"I say, Clutchit!" cried the prisoner in an ecstasy, "just tell these people, will you, that I never murdered a dentist! —confound his breeches!—but that I am Sam Holt of Bastock—Rosy Sam."

Mr Clutchit, thus addressed, bore witness to the respectability of his client, and begged to be made acquainted with the circumstances of the case. On hearing the name of the missing individual, he exclaimed, "O, he's safe enough—this very morning he was arrested at Westminster for debt, and is snugly lodged in the Fleet. A stout good-complexioned man, a dentist, about two-and-forty years of age, and much such a figure as Mr Holt."

"Just such a figure," cried Sam; "our clothes fit each other, as if the tailor had measured us both."

Mr Clutchit's evidence altered the appearance of the question, and a messenger was despatched to the Fleet to ascertain whether the dentist was really there. In a short time he returned to the Court with the following letter:—

"SIR—I am sorry for the scrape my disappearance has got you into. On shaving myself last night, I cut my chin very severely, and had nothing at hand to stop the bleeding. On getting up very early to proceed to Westminster, I took my trunk down stairs and put it into a boat, but recollecting I had left my dressing case, I returned for it as gently as I could, for fear of disturbing the house. It was so dark at the time, that I find, in mistake, I had put on some clothes which did not belong to me. On landing at Westminster, I was unfortunately arrested at the suit of a scoundrel of the name of Clutchit, and sent off to this place. I herewith return you the things contained in your pockets; and would return the habiliments themselves, but just at present have no change of wardrobe. Yours respectfully, ABRAHAM REEVE."

Sam was now complimented and apologized to, on all hands, and though Mr Clutchit spoke in no very kindly terms of the unhappy Abraham, owing, perhaps, to the manner in which he was spoken of in the note, Sam, who was now in the highest spirits, said, as they went out of the office together,—"He's not a bad fellow that same dentist—he has saved my neck from the gallows, and I'll be hanged if I don't pay his debt. But I say, Clutchit, only think what would have become of me if he had been drowned on his way to Westminster!"

"Ah, my dear sir, you know nothing about the law. But come, we must talk on business. I have not yet seen Sir Harry, but have a note from him—that he expects us both to dine with him on board his yacht to-day, which is lying at Blackwall. You had better go and arrange matters with him in a friendly way, while I draw out the deeds, and make all right."

"Just as you please," said Sam, "but in the meantime, my toggery is not just what I could wish, and my purse"——

"Say no more, say no more. One can get every thing in London." And in the course of an hour, Sam found himself well dressed, with two or three shirts and other articles in a carpet-bag, and fifty sovereigns in his pocket, for which he gave the lawyer his note. Rejoicing in his recovered liberty, and anticipating a comfortable dinner and quiet bottle once

more, he presented himself on board the Tartar at 4 o'clock. Sir Harry was delighted to see him—introduced him to some friends who were on board, and in the happiest mood possible the whole party sat down to dinner. But Sam's hilarity was doomed to be of short duration. Before he had time to swallow the first mouthful, he perceived that the vessel was in motion. Sir Harry assured him they were only going a trip to the Downs to see the fleet, and would be back the next day; and Mr Holt, who never took long to accept a friendly invitation, professed his happiness at the prospect of the voyage. But a dinner on board a little yacht of fifty tons, and in his nice parlour at Bastock Lodge, were very different things. A slight swell of the river made her motion very uneasy, and a lurch which emptied a plateful of scalding pea-soup into Sam's lap, and diverted the point of his fork from its original destination—a kidney potato,—to the more sensitive kidneys of his leeward neighbour, made him half repent his nautical expedition. When they had left the comparative smoothness of the river, and entered upon the open sea, which was heaving under a pretty tolerable breeze, Sam's feelings were of a very different nature from those of pleasure. After various ineffectual attempts to enjoy himself below, he felt that the fresh air was absolutely necessary to his comfort, and rushed upon deck. Here he was quite bewildered. The night was not entirely dark, but a dim lurid gloom spread itself all round the heavens, and even so unpractised an eye as poor Sam's saw that there was a storm in the sky. In the mean time, the wind blew fresher every minute, and the Tartar skimmed on the top of the waves one moment, and the other, sunk so instantaneously into the hollow of the sea, that Sam laid himself down upon the deck, partly to repress his sickness, and partly, perhaps, to conceal his fears. Mean while, mirth and revelry were going on below, and even the sailors appeared to Sam to be much less attentive to the vessel than the exigency of affairs demanded. From time to time our friend lifted up his head, to satisfy himself whether the sea was becoming more rough, and laid himself down again with an increase of his alarm. At last he caught an indistinct view of some large dark object, heaving and

tumbling in the waters; he kept his eye as steadily fixed on it as his sickness would allow, until he saw that it was a ship of large size: "I say, coachman!" he said to the man at the wheel, "mind your reins; there's a London waggon coming down hill, fifteen mile an hour!" The man, whose ideas were as thoroughly nautical as Sam's were terrene, paid no attention to his warning; but still Sam's eyes were fixed on the approaching object, and he cried out, in the extremity of alarm,—"Drive on, drive on, or pull to the side of the road; or we shall all be spilt!" His exclamations produced no effect, and the ship drew rapidly near. He saw her as her huge beam rose upon the crest of a wave, and sank yawning down again, till her hull was entirely hid; but each time she rose, he perceived that she had greatly shortened the space between them. Sam cried out to the steersman, "You infernal villain, why don't you get out of the way? Do you not understand what's said to you, you tarry, quid-chewing abomination! See, see, she's on us!—she's on us!" He heard the dash of her bows through the foam, and while the bellying of her sails above sounded like thunder, a hoarse voice was heard through the storm, crying, "Luff—luff;" and the helmsman, now thoroughly awakened to his danger, turned the wheel, but it was too late. A scream, wild and appalling, burst from the crew, who were on deck, and the next instant a crash took place; the little vessel shook as if every plank were bursting, and Sam found himself battling with the waves. He soon lost all consciousness of his situation, and how long had elapsed he did not know; but when he came to his recollection, he found himself in a warm bed, while a gentleman in naval uniform was holding his pulse, and several other persons anxiously looking on. "It's of no use, I tell you," said Sam, with a rueful expression of countenance. "It's of no use—I'm a changed man. Yesterday I was nearly hanged, now I'm entirely drowned; and what's to happen next, Lord only knows. The last time I slept in Bastock, I had never been forty miles from home, but now I suppose I'm at the other end of the world."

"Keep yourself quiet, sir, you are in good quarters," said the gentleman who held his pulse. "You are on board his

Majesty's ship Bloodsucker, 84, bound for the Mediterranean. Take this composing draught, and keep yourself quiet for a few days, and I have no doubt of your soon recovering your strength." And accordingly, in a very few days, Sam was able to go upon deck. By the ease and jollity of his social disposition, he soon made himself a favourite with the mess. On his first emerging from his cabin, he gazed with breathless astonishment at the prospect which presented itself—magnificent hills at an amazing distance, and a vast extent of level country, rejoicing in the sunshine. "Pray, sir," said Sam, to a tall romantic-looking gentleman in black, who was admiring the same scene, "what county may we be opposite now? Is it any part of Hampshire, sir?"

"Hampshire!" repeated the gentleman, thus addressed, —"These are the mountains of Spain. These hills were trod by Hannibal, and the Scipios, by the Duke of Wellington, and Don Quixote. This is the land of the Inquisition and liquorice. Yonder is Cape Trafalgar; there, in the arms of victory and Sir Thomas Hardy, fell heroic one-eyed Nelson! That is Cape Spartel. Hail Afric's scorching shore, hot-bed of niggers! See! we open the Pillars of Hercules! These mighty portals past, every step we'll be on classic ground or water."

Long before this rhapsody was concluded, our friend had betaken himself to another part of the ship, and did not appreciate the eloquence and enthusiasm of the classical chaplain of the Bloodsucker. It is not to be supposed that Sam was a willing encounterer, all this time, of the perils of the deep. Frequent and anxious were his enquiries as to the possibility of his return. He was assured that at Gibraltar there was no doubt of his getting a homeward vessel, but till then, he had better accommodate himself to circumstances. Accordingly, with right good-will, he set himself to enjoy as many comforts as his position would afford. The purser, being luckily a stout individual, furnished him with a wardrobe; and the wine being good, the mess pleasant, and the sea calm, Sam's only drawback from his felicity was his absence from Bastock Lodge. On casting anchor off St Rosier, they ascertained from the pratique boat that the

yellow fever was so virulent on shore, that the deaths averaged nine a day; so, without the delay of a moment, all sail was hoisted again, and with a favourable breeze the Bloodsucker pursued her way to Malta.

Here, at last, Sam was lucky enough to get information of the sailing of a Sicilian sparonara bound for Catania, from which he was assured he could not fail to catch the regular passage-boat home. With many adieus and cordial invitations to the officers to beat up his quarters at Bastock Lodge, Sam betook himself to the St Agata, with every prospect of a favourable voyage. The passengers consisted principally of invalided officers and soldiers, and Sam had the deck to himself. As night was coming on, a vessel about the same size as the St Agata hove in sight, and, in passing, made a signal of distress, and begged some water, as their casks, they said, had all leaked out. "Oh, give the poor devils some water," said Sam, as soon as he understood what they wanted. "Thirst is a horrible thing—especially of a morning after dining out." The strange vessel sent its barge; but no sooner had the crew got on board, than at the whistle of the villain who had mounted first, eight armed men started from the bottom of the boat, and, after a slight struggle, in which they shot two sailors and threw the captain overboard, they gained possession of the St Agata, and secured all the passengers below. After being kept in confinement a long time, and sparingly fed on bread and water, they were landed one moonlight night, and marched into a dark cave among the rocks on the sea-shore. Sam's meditations were by no means of a pleasing cast. "Don't you think it a very hard case, sir," he said to the officer who was chained to his wrist, and whose strength, after a severe fever in Malta, was scarcely able to support him under the treatment of his captors—"Don't you think it a hard case on a middle-aged man like me, that I should be moved about all over the world against my will, leaving the nicest cottage in England, and a lot of good fellows—to be first suspected of murdering somebody else, and then most likely to be murdered myself?"

"The last," replied the invalid, "we shall all undoubtedly be, as we are in the hands of the Greeks."

"Of the Philistines, you mean," said Sam—"but it's all the same." While carrying on this melancholy conversation, they were suddenly startled by a great deal of firing, mixed with screams, and the other outcries which attended an onslaught. "Mercy on us all!" said Sam, "what the devil is to come next?"

"They are most probably murdering some other prisoners," replied his companion; "it will be our turn soon."

"Then, I'll take my oath, they shan't kill me like a sheep. I'll have a tussle for it, and if I get a right-hander on some of the scoundrels' breadbaskets, I'll make them know what it is to bully a free-born Englishman." In a short time, advancing steps were heard, and our bold Briton, supporting his companion to the mouth of the cave, stood in as Crib-like an attitude as his unencumbered hand could assume; and resolved to knock down the first man that entered. They had not been long in this situation, when they perceived that their place of confinement was left unguarded, and they were still more surprised, on proceeding a little way in front, to perceive the dead bodies of several of their captors, already partly stripped, while further down upon the beach they saw a large body of Turks forcing many of the unarmed natives on board of some vessels close on shore. While congratulating themselves on this prospect of escape, and while they continued gazing on the scene before them, they were suddenly surrounded by a fresh body of Turks, and, without a word spoken on either side, they were conducted down the passes of the rocks, and conveyed on board. "Worse and worse," sighed Sam, whom this last disaster reduced to complete despair—"It is my firm belief I am not Sam Holt of Bastock, but have changed places with the Wandering Jew.—Jack Thomson's prophecy is fulfilled, every bit of it." But poor Sam's lamentations were of no avail. On the third day, they were taken out of the vessel, and conveyed to shore. The unfortunate invalid with whom Sam had been chained so long, appeared so ill after landing, that he was released from the fetters; and what became of him Sam never discovered. Our friend, whose dress was of the most heterogeneous nature, consisting of whatever articles he could pick

up—for, in all his misfortunes, his wardrobe was the first to suffer—was ranged along a wall, in a magnificent building along with about forty others, of all ages and countries Many people, in strange dresses, with towels, as Sam expressed it, round their heads, passed and repassed them, looking narrowly at each. At last, an old white-whiskered man, pointing with his finger to the still portly figure of our friend, entered into a conversation with the person who had conducted them to the place, and in a few minutes Sam was taken out from the rest, and the old gentleman, beckoning him to follow, walked majestically out of the building. Poor Sam, who now felt himself to be a very different being from what he used to be, presiding over his well-filled table at Bastock Lodge, followed in the most submissive manner imaginable. His conductor paused at the door of a very stately edifice, and said a few words, which Sam did not understand, to a group of lounging domestics. Immediately three or four of them rushed forward, and violently seized hold of Sam, and carried him into the hall. They there let him stand for a few minutes, till the old gentleman who had preceded them, and who had gone into an inner apartment, returned and spoke to them in the same language as before. Again they hurried Sam forward, and at last when they came to a pause, the astonished Squire of Bostock had time to look round him. Seated on a low, richly covered ottoman, was an old white-headed man, with a long pipe in his mouth; near him were several others, but evidently his inferiors—while, a little way from the raised floor on which they were sitting, was a multitude of soldiers in such a uniform, and with such arms, as had never entered into Sam's imagination to conceive. While he was taking this survey, the old gentleman his conductor, bending to the very ground before the magnifico with the pipe, apparently directed his attention to Rosy Sam. Without casting his sublime eyes on so insignificant an object, the great man ordered the dragoman to discover who the stranger was. A young man now stepped forward and addressed our friend in French.

"No, no—no parly vous," said Sam, who knew just enough of the sound to guess what language it was.

He next spoke to him in English, and said he was ready to report Sam's answers to the dignitary on the sofa.

"I say," said Sam, who had now recovered a little of his confidence from hearing his mother tongue once more, "who's the old covey in the dressing-gown? He seems a prime judge of tobacco."

The person alluded to scowled and said something to the interpreter, who turned to Sam and said,—"His highness, the Reis Effendi, says you are a dog, and if you speak until you're spoken to, he will tear your tongue out, and cut off both your ears."

"He's cursedly polite—but did you say he was the Rice Offendy?—ask him if he hasn't a brass gun upon wheels that kills sea-mews at a hundred and fifty yards?"

The interpreter, probably not understanding Sam's language, or willing to screen him from his excellency's anger, said a few words, and promised obedience on the part of Sam.

The conversation went on. "The Reis Effendi wishes to know if you have any particular wish to be strangled?"

"Tell the Rice, that, with his permission, I would much rather not, but am just as much obliged to him for his kind offer."

"His highness wishes to know if you have any objections to be beautifully dressed, well treated, made rich, and have eight wives supported for you at the Sultan's expense."

"Tell him," said Sam, quite delighted, "that he is a jolly old cock—that I accept his offer with all my heart; but as to the wives, I can't think of more than one, or two at the very most."

"Will you turn Mussulman to obtain all these advantages?"

"Musselman? Ay, to be sure; I'm a devil of a fellow at all sorts of fish."

"Will you wear the turban, and swear by the Prophet?"

"Turban? Yes—Lord bless you, what does it signify what a man wears? and as to swearing, 'gad I'll outswear you all for a hundred."

On the dragoman relating the result of the conversation,

his highness deigned to cast eyes on the new believer, and at a nod several men stepped forward and threw little jars of rose water over his face and person ; and immediately he was hurried into another apartment, stripped by five or six zealous attendants, forced into a warm bath which was richly perfumed, and after being rubbed and anointed, he was clothed in the splendid flowing robes, and ornamented with the glittering jewels of a Turkish bashaw. When he came into the anteroom, through which he had already passed, he recognised the old gentleman who had brought him to the palace, and beckoned him to come near.

" I say, old boy, what can be the meaning of all this? Are ye all mad, or only drunk?" The old man man bowed, and almost prostrated himself, but answered nothing. " O, I see how it is," continued Sam. " Whereabouts is the dragsman? He's no great hand at English, poor devil, but he is better than none."

The dragoman appeared, and bending obsequiously, said, " What is it your lordship's pleasure to do with your slave?"

" Pooh, lordship ! nonsense, man. I say, Draggy, he's a comical old shaver, that Rice Offendy; and fought rather shy of answering us about the gun ; for my own part, I think it's a lie of Jack Thomson's."

" Your lordship is too complaisant to your slave."

" Perhaps I should be if I had him; but we have no slaves. I have a servant, an old canting scoundrel, called Trusty Tommy; but pshaw! you know nothing about these things. Now, can you tell me what they want me to do, for surely all this scrubbing and dressing can't be for nothing?"

" Your highness's escort is now, I believe, at the door. You are about to proceed as ambassador from the Sultan of the World to the Pacha of Albania. Your highness is decorated with three tails."

" The devil a tail have they left me at all—not so much as a jacket—I feel for all the world as if I were in petticoats. Well, you say I go as ambassador to some gentleman in Albania. Is it a long journey?"

" Yes, it will be some time before your highness's return."

" For I was thinking," continued Sam, " it would be as

well, before I go to—to——how many wives did you say I was to have kept for me by the Sultan?"

"There were eight destined to rejoice in your highness's smiles."

"The devil there were! But where do they hang out? They are, perhaps, ugly old frights."

"Beautiful as angels in Paradise. But the sultan's orders are imperative. Your highness must not delay a single moment, but leave every thing till you return."

"Well, well, what must be, must." And Sam mounted a magnificent Arab, which was standing at the door, and set off with a large retinue of splendidly dressed warriors, while another interpreter rode close by his side. As he left the gate of the city, an officer stopped the cavalcade, and, with all due formalities, delivered a packet into the ambassador's hand. The interpreter told him to lay the packet on his head, for it was the firman of the sultan. In a short time the *cortège* passed on, and Sam had ample time to moralise on the mutability of fortune. Long before the journey was over, he was intimate with every man of the escort; and when, at length, on entering the Albanian territory, all, except four, left him, they took leave of him with so much appearance of regret, as evidently showed how much they liked their commander.

One day, in riding down the side of a gentle valley, they came, at a winding of the rude track they were pursuing, upon a large body of horsemen; and as they were immediately surrounded, they had no alternative but to mention who they were, and submit. On the interpreter informing them that his master bore a communication to the Pacha from the Sultan, they drew back with the utmost respect, and fell into the line of march, as part of his military guard. They informed the party that the Pacha was encamped a few miles farther down the valley, with an army of forty thousand men, and that he had expected the Sultan's ambassador for some time. Encouraged by this assurance, Sam put his Arabian on his mettle, and soon was in the heart of the encampment. The Pacha's tent was easily known from its superior splendour, and in a few minutes Sam was conducted in great pomp to his highness's quarters. Fierce-looking soldiers scowled

upon him as he passed, and Sam was not altogether at ease when he observed the ominous sneers they exchanged with each other.

At last he stopped short, and said to one of the soldiers, whose expression he did not like, "You popinjay in fine clothes, do you make these faces at me?"

Another soldier who was standing by, started forward and said, "Good God! an Englishman, and in that dress!—It is not even yet too late to save you; if you go on, you will be murdered to a certainty—the Pacha has put twelve ambassadors to death already."

"The devil he has! and I'm sent here to make up the baker's dozen! Well, countryman, what's to be done? If you get me out of this scrape, and ever come to Bastock"——

"Stay—the only plan, when the Pacha asks you for the firman, is to say you've lost it;—here, give it to me." And Sam had scarcely time to follow the soldier's advice, when he found himself in presence of the rebel chief.

He was standing at the farther end of the tent, in the middle of a group of officers. On seeing his highness the ambassador, he advanced half way to meet him, and bowed with all the reverence of an Eastern prostration.

"I worship the shadow of the sovereign of the universe. Your highness does too much honour to your slave."

"Your servant, old gentleman, your servant," said Sam, who guessed from the Pacha's manner that he was paying him a compliment; "a pleasant gentlemanly sort of man, and no murderer, I'll be bound.—Tell him I'm glad to see him, and hope he's well—ask him how his wife is, and the children."

The interpreter, at Sam's request, made a courteous speech.

"The messenger of the Sultan is master here. We are sorry we can offer him no better accommodation."

"The accommodation's good enough—but riding in these hot mornings with a tablecloth on one's head is thirsty work, Master Dragsman. Ask him if he could give one a glass of brandy and water—cold without."

But the Pacha anticipated his desire. He seated him on the highest ottoman in the tent, and treated him with a de-

ference and respect which were quite astonishing to Sam, but which seemed to yield the greatest amusement to the officers of the staff.

"The bearer of the firman is powerful as Azrael. Say, where is the imperial order for your slave's unfortunate head? The officers of the bow-string are near."

"An order for his head! Tell him, I know nothing about his head, nor his bow-strings either. I brought a letter from an old smoking fellow at Constantinople, but I've unfortunately lost it by the way."

"What! lost it?" said the Pacha, who did not seem by any means rejoiced at the prospect of retaining his head. "Your highness is pleased to jest with your servant. You undoubtedly came from the monarch of the earth to put the cord round your slave's neck?"

"I'll be cursed if I came for any such purpose."

"Ah, then," said the Pacha, "it grieves me we can only give you the second-rate robe of honour.—We are deprived of our sport" (he said to his attendants); "for this time at least your chief's head is in safety. Put the caftan of favour round the dragoman's shoulders."

Two splendidly dressed men, with arms bared up to the elbow, and bearing a silk cord, now advanced towards the interpreter. He clung for safety to his excellency the ambassador, screaming, "Save me, save me—they are going to strangle your slave."

"Strangle!—Nonsense, man—Didn't the old gentleman treat us in the most polite way possible; and isn't he laughing, and all the other people too, as if it were a capital joke?"

But in spite of Sam's consolatory observations, the interpreter continued his entreaties.

The men had now got up to him, and laid the green silk cord upon his shoulder. They then brought the two ends round to his breast; and another person, who seemed of higher rank, stepped forward, bearing a short staff in his hand. Round this staff he twisted the ends of the cord till it was closely drawn to the dragoman's throat, and then he waited with the most imperturbable coolness for some signal from the chief. That personage, however, seemed to enjoy

the scene too much to bring it to a speedy conclusion, and continued to pour out his ironical compliments both to the dragoman and to Sam. "The caftan of honour is given to the servant of the messenger of the Sultan; he does not seem to prize the distinction sufficiently."

"Oh, save your slave!" exclaimed the dragoman. "He is a dog, and would lick the dust; but save him, your highness!"

"Come, Mister Pacha," said Sam, as coaxingly as he could, "you have had your fun with the poor devil, though I can't see the joke of it myself. You see he's half dead with fright. Let him go; there's a good fellow."

"There are twelve of your brethren, the scoundrelly Greeks of the Faynal, gone before you, all wearing the same marks of my favour. See that the caftan fits him close—he will catch cold else." As he said these words, the Pacha nodded to the person who held the staff; and in an instant, by a dexterous turn of the wrist, the cord was drawn tight, and the howlings and terrified exclamations of the dragoman were cut short by death. The staff was untwisted ere Sam recovered from his amazement, and the corpse of his companion, still writhing, fell down upon his feet.

He started up in horror at the murder, and, forgetting the danger which surrounded him, he exclaimed—"You bloodthirsty Turk! if there's law or justice to be had for love or money, you shall swing for this. You're a pretty son of a gun, to pretend to be so polite, and then to kill a poor devil of a fellow who never did you a morsel of harm. Keep your cursed sofa to yourself, for I would not stay with such a Burking old scoundrel, no, not to be mayor of London." And Sam, foaming with indignation, stalked away; but he had not gone far when the same two men who had brought the cord stopped him, and led him back to the ottoman he had left. This time, instead of a bow-string, they carried a long thong of thick leather, and the Pacha, still continuing his respectful behaviour, said,—"Your excellency is too condescending to your slave. Ho! chamberlain—put the Shoes of Glory on his highness's feet."

With the rapidity of lightning, Sam was thrown back upon

the sofa; his shoes forcibly taken from his feet, and while the whole tent was convulsed with laughter, one of the men, swinging the bastinado round his head, inflicted such a blow on his unprotected soles, that Sam screamed aloud with mingled rage and pain,—"Let me go this moment, ye bloody-minded rascals. Confound me if I don't haul you up for this. —I'll bring an action"——

But here the second blow enraged him beyond all endurance; and while struggling with enormous strength, and roaring at the top of his lungs, he felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and, on looking up, saw Jack Thomson in his dressing-gown, and all the rest of us standing around his bed.

"Why, Rosy Sam, what the deuce is the matter with you this morning, disturbing the whole house?"

"Matter," said Sam, sitting bolt upright, "where's that infernal Turk? I'll teach him to strike an Englishman on the feet. What, Jack Thomson! Jem! Bill!—All here —at Bastock!—Lord bless ye! I've had such a dream—all coming of your confounded stories, Jack. I thought I was tried, drowned, taken, sold, beat, bastinadoed, married to eight wives, and the devil knows all what. But here we are, my boys, let's have our breakfast; then we'll have a day's coursing in the upland fields, and after dinner I'll tell you all my adventures—how I was sent as an ambassador by the Sultan."

"And they could not have found a fellow," said Jack (who was a considerable punster), "who could have made himself more at home with the *Sublime Port* than yourself."

THE HOUR OF FORTUNE.

IN THREE NICKS.

Methought I was present with Quevedo when he paid one of his visits to Elysium. Jove seemed to be in a most towering passion, and grumbled and growled amazingly; interlarding his discourse with sundry expletives, not fit to be mentioned to ears polite. Many of the Immortals came running up to ascertain the cause of his indignation. Apollo, with a flaming crown upon his head, made of highly burnished brass, rose from a table where he had been puzzling for a rhyme, and approached with the pen still in his hand; Bacchus was disturbed at his fifteenth tumbler, and resigned the whisky bottle with a sigh. The ladies too drew near in a state of great agitation. Venus came first, wondering what could have put her father into such a rage, and hiding a billet-doux she had just received from Mars. That gallant deity also approached, dressed like a captain in the yeomanry; and while all the rest stood in silence, wondering at Jupiter's exclamations, he looked as bold as a bully after a beating, and said, "How now, governor! what's the meaning of all this? What mare's nest have you discovered now?" Jupiter, who, by the by, very needlessly, as I thought, held a flaming thunderbolt in his hand, though it was now the height of summer, frowned upon his impertinent questioner, and said, "Hold your tongue, you babbling Bobadil, or I'll crack your skull with this thunderbolt. Send little Mercury here, some of you." In a moment Mercury was at his side, dressed in

the Olympian livery, sky-blue turned up with sable, as tidy a sort of footman as ever I saw, and bowing, waited his master's command. "Go," said Jupiter, "and bring that infernal old jade Fortune here, as fast as you can; and don't stay tippling in the pothouses by the way, or making love to the bar-maids." In an instant the shoulder-knots expanded into wings, the gold-headed cane changed into a caduceus, and the clocks in his stockings sprang out into well-feathered pinions; and before you could see that he was gone, he was back again, dragging an old-looking woman by the ear, who squalled terribly under the operation, and uttered many complaints against him for his roughness. She rolled in upon a curious sort of wheel, round which an innumerable multitude of strings were twisted in all possible directions; and she was attended by a tall strapping-looking woman as her servant. This domestic was almost bald, except that there was one lock of rich glossy hair hanging over her brow; and the story went, that whoever could lay hold of that lock, had not only her but her mistress also, entirely in their power. The maid's name was Opportunity. I had scarcely time to make these remarks, when Jupiter, in a voice of thunder, exclaimed, "So, madam! you are here at last. I have fifty complaints sent up to me every day, that you neglect your duty; and, what is worse, they cast all the blame of your negligence upon me. Now, that's what I won't stand—it would wear out the patience of Job."

Upon this the old lady cast an angry look on her attendant, and said, "How is this, you good-for-nothing baggage? Is it for this that I pay you such wages, and feed you so well, that I should be snubbed before company after this fashion?" Then turning to Jupiter, who had laid down the thunderbolt, by accident, on his neighbour Apollo's lap, and almost burnt up the thin nankeen breeches in which he was drest, she said, "Indeed, indeed, sir, it is none of my fault. I go my rounds, and keep my eyes about me, as well as I am able; but if people won't take the trouble to tell me what they want, or even to give their cards to my servant here"——

"Yes, indeed," interrupted the damsel thus referred to, "if gemmen won't mind us poor servants, and give us a small

token now and then, I wonder how we are to get on, on the wages we get."

"Ah, certainly," said Mars, who had been a sad gallant in his time, "I always found in my young days that a tip to the waiting-maid was the surest way to the heart of the mistress; and so, as I was saying, my pretty maid, here's half-a-crown for you, to help to buy"——

"Paws off, Pompey," cried the maid, "and keep the half-crown to bribe the next blacksmith.—Isn't that Master Vulcan I see limping this way with a net in his hand?"

The gentleman slipt back to his place as quickly as he could, while even Jupiter could scarcely help laughing at his crest-fallen appearance; however, putting on a terrible frown, he continued—"I don't care how it has happened; but, by the Lord Harry, if it ever takes place again—if I hear any more complaints made against your administration, I'll turn you out of office in a twinkling, and give the seals to the Opposition."

Terrified by this threat, the old lady promised the strictest attention, and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, if you will wait for a short time, you shall see some wonderful sights. What's o'clock just now?" Half-a-dozen watches were pulled out in an instant, but no two of them were precisely agreed. However, Apollo, whose time-keeper goes on a diamond, assured her it was exactly a quarter to six.

"Wait, then, just fifteen minutes, and whenever your jolly countenance makes every dial-plate point to six o'clock, you shall see the sports begin. High and low, rich and poor, every man, woman, and child, shall, for once at least, have *what they deserve.*" Saying this, she tumbled off upon her wheel, creaking and crackling, as if it had not been greased for a century, and going at such a rate, that she was out of sight in a moment.

NICK THE FIRST.

"We have still a home, my Emily, though it is a poor one," said Ernest Darley to his beautiful young wife, the first day they took possession of their lodgings in a humble alley in London. "I little thought, when we used to wander in the old woods at Balston, that I should take you to such a miserable abode as this."

"I am happier here, dear Ernest, than in the woods of Balston."

"Now, by heavens, it makes me angry to see you happy! I believe you would continue to smile and be contented if we were in jail."

"If we were in jail together, Ernest."

"Ah! bless you, my own dearest. Fortune cannot continue to frown on so much goodness."

"The Christian calls Fortune by a different name. He calls it Providence."

"Well, providence, fortune, fate, chance, or whatever other name it rejoices in, cannot surely persecute us for ever. We are guilty of no fault."

"We married against your uncle's will. He spurned us from the moment we were united. He must have some reason surely for his detestation of me."

"What reason can any one have to detest *you?* You were poor—had he not told me over and over again that he did not care for wealth in the object of my choice? You were young, beautiful, accomplished, my equal in birth—it can't be—it can't be! I tell you it must be something that *I* have done which makes him so enraged."

"And what have *you* done, Ernest, that can make him your enemy? You bore with all his humours and caprices; you were affectionate to him as a son; he loved you better than any thing else upon earth. How kind he was to you in your youth, and how well you deserved his kindness! No, no, it is me he persecutes—me he hates."

"Then may the God of"——

"Hush! hush! dear Ernest. He may yet relent."

"Relent! Ha, ha! Sir Edward Darley relent! I tell you he makes it one of his boasts that he never forgave, and never will forgive, even an imaginary offence. Relent! I tell you, he is of that stubborn, obstinate nature, the feeling of repentance is unknown to him."

"Try him, dear Ernest; he cannot be so immovable. Ask him in what we have offended him, and tell him we are anxious to atone for our offence."

"Have I *not* written to him?—Have I not begged an interview, in terms which I never thought I should have meanness enough to address to mortal man? Have I not besought him at least to inform me what I have done to draw down his indignation, and has he ever even deigned to send an answer? I have left our address here with his scoundrelly attorney, in case he should condescend to favour me with a reply."

At this moment a knock was heard at the door, and in answer to the "Come in" of Mr Darley, a lawyer's clerk presented himself, and with no very respectful demeanour, held out a letter.

"A letter? From whom?"

"From Mr Clutchem. Does it wait an answer?"

Ernest hurriedly glanced it over.

"No. There—there!" he said, as soon as they were again alone. "Relent, indeed! Read it."

Emily took the letter, and read,

"Sir,—I am desired by Sir Edward Darley, Bart., to inform you, that no begging letters will be received; and farther, I am desired to inform you, that Sir Edward Darley holds acknowledgments from you for the sum of L.3400, advanced to you while at Oxford. Measures will be taken to exact payment of the full amount forthwith. Your obedient servant, "Simon Clutchem."

"Then we are indeed entirely ruined!" said Emily, with a sigh.

"Do you doubt it? so we have been any day these three months."

"But can he really claim that money?"

"I suppose so. He always took my acknowledgments for the amount of my year's allowance, solely, he said, to enable him to keep his books. As he had always taught me to consider myself his heir, I never thought he would produce them against me; but stay, have you looked on the other page of the note?"

"P.S. I am further requested to beg your presence to-day, at half-past five, to be witness to an important deed."

At the appointed hour Ernest was punctually at Mr Clutchem's office. There, sitting in an easy-chair, to his great surprise he saw his uncle. He approached with a gush of old feelings at his heart, but the baronet fiercely ordered him back.

"Stand there," he said, "till I tell you the reason for which I have summoned you here to-day. You recollect the old long-tailed pony you rode when you were a little boy at school, which I turned out for life at your request?"

"I do," said Ernest, wondering to what this address tended.

"I had him shot the day before yesterday. Your dogs—you no doubt recollect them very well? Bruno, and Ponto, and Cæsar—and the old Newfoundland that brought Miss Merivale—I beg your pardon, Mrs Ernest Darley, your amiable wife, out of the lake, when your awkwardness upset the boat?"

"I do—the faithful affectionate creature!"

"I hanged them all at the same time.—You recollect Abraham Andrews whom you installed in the fancy cottage in the park, and his mother, and his family, that you were so much interested in? They have left the cottage; they have been paupers on the parish for some time."

"Sir!" cried Ernest, "if you only summoned me here to listen to the recital of such infamous, inhuman"——

"Spare your heroics, young man, you will listen to something more before we part. But come, we're wasting time.

Now hear me. You married that girl. You asked no leave of me. Do you know, sir, who her mother was—who her father was,—and do you know, sir, what reason I have to hate them? Answer me that, sir."

"Her father and mother have long been dead, sir. I never knew any cause you could have to dislike them."

"Dislike!—use better words, sir. Say hate—detest—abhor them! Oh! you did not?—you ought to have asked, sir—you would have known that the mother ruined my happiness—that the father attempted to take my life—that I loved her, sir—fiercely—truly—and that she taught me to believe that she returned my love;—till—till it suited her purposes, and she proved herself a"——

"Stay, sir. I will hear no such language applied to the mother of my wife."

"Your wife! Oh, is she *your* wife, sir? and has her equipages, no doubt, and her country house, and her town house—your lady wife, sir—and her mother was"——

"I shall stay here no longer, sir."

"Wait, wait!—Mr Clutchem, is the deed all properly prepared? worded so that the law can find no flaws in't?"

"It is, Sir Edward."

"Then give me a pen, Mr Clutchem; it wants but my signature to make it efficient.

"This deed, Mr Ernest Darley, is my will—by which I bestow irrevocably, lands, houses, money, goods, mortgages, &c. &c., on certain charities, for which I care nothing, sir, but that I know my bequest will be less beneficial, so applied, than by any other means; and I leave you, sir, and your inestimable wife, the baronetcy—oh! I would not have you deprived of that!—and a jail, sir; and here, sir, I have called you to be a witness. The ink, the ink, Mr Clutchem," he continued, and held out the pen to dip it in the inkstand, keeping his eye still savagely fixed on his unfortunate nephew. The clock struck six—a sudden light flashed into the room—and Ernest thought he heard, for one moment, the creaking of a wheel.

The baronet's hand continued in the same position—his eye still glared upon the countenance of his nephew, and dead

silence reigned in the room. At last Mr Clutchem advanced,—"How's this? bless me, Sir Edward is quite cold! Help, there—run for Sir Astley! Ah! the passion was too much for him—gone off in a fit.—Dead as unsigned parchment. Sir Ernest, I shall be happy, sir, to continue in the service of the family. The rent-roll is in my desk, sir—fourteen thousand a-year. How would you like the funeral conducted? Quite private, of course. Honour me by accepting the loan of this two thousand pounds for your immediate expenses. I wish you long life, Sir Ernest, and joy of your title, Sir Ernest. Sir Edward shall be carefully buried this day-week."

NICK THE SECOND.

"Down the road,—down the road—ya! hip! there goes the bang-up tippers!—that 'ere in the snowy benjamin is Jem Larkins, as drives the Funny Woman, all the way from Cheltenham, thirteen mile an hour."

"Oh! a rare fight it will be, von't it, Jem?"

"Vell, I'm blow'd if that ben't a turn out, however. Who is them coves in the brishky?"

"Oh, them's the backers; that 'ere on the near side is Sir Philip Pudgil, and this here on the far side is the Honourable Mr Augustus Scamp. Sir Philip backs Bill for a couple o' hundreds."

The two gentlemen thus described by the hostler of the Queen's Head, proceeded rapidly on their way to Hurly Bottom, where a grand pugilistic contest was appointed to take place. Their conversation on the road was brief, as both seemed to prefer their private cogitations to the interchange of speech. When they drew near the place of contest, they began to look out with considerable anxiety for their respective men. The crowd collected was immense; but leaving their carriage, they had no great difficulty in making their

way to the little alehouse where the combatants remained till the hour fixed on for entering the ring. Here the gentlemen separated, Sir Philip proceeding to the apartment of Bill, and Mr Scamp repairing to that of the other combatant.

"I'll tell you what it is, Tom," said the Honourable Augustus, when he found himself alone with his champion, "you must make a cross of it, and lose."

"Why so, sir? I've posted the blunt on my own side and must do my best to win."

"Nonsense; I'll make up your losses—the odds are six to four on you. I've taken them all, to the tune of eight thousand pounds. I'll pay your bets, and make it a five hundred screen in your favour besides."

"Oh, as to that, I can wap Bill or lose to him, for sartain, —but are you sure he's not bought to lose too?—for, if so be, you know he may give in the first blow, and we must win spite of ourselves."

"No danger of that; Sir Philip's fresh in the ring, and orders him to do his best. Now, he's a regular glutton, so you may give him as much as you like the first four or five rounds, and take as much as he'll give you. You had better sprain your wrist in the seventh or eighth round, when the odds have risen to twelve to one, and give in about the twelfth."

"Well, sir, I'm always ready to act as the gentleman to any gentleman as is a gentleman. Can I have the five hundred down, sir?"

"No, no, Tom,—do the work first,—you and I know each other. I'll give you no chance of selling me too. But, come, time's up,—do as I say, and your money's safe."

The whole cavalcade now went up to the place where the commissary-general had extended the ropes. Sir Philip, the backer of the opposite party, dexterously slipped across, and whispered in Tom's ear,—"Win the battle, Tom, and I give ye half a thousand."

"The fool!" whispered our friend Tom to his bottle-holder, as the baronet turned away, "if he had clapped on another hundred I would have won the battle in ten minutes."

It is useless to describe the fortunes of the fight. The odds

rose to twelve to three on Tom; Bill to all appearance was dead beat, when, in the ninth round, the winning man dislocated his wrist, and, after taking an extraordinary quantity of punishment, and losing three of his teeth, went down, and was deaf to the call of time. Both men were most terribly bruised, the eyes of both were cut and swelled amazingly, and the victor and vanquished were carried off upon shutters, and carefully put to bed. Mean while the two patrons of the ring got into their carriage once more, and returned quickly to town. They agreed to dine together that day. The Honourable Augustus Scamp paid over the two hundred pounds to Sir Philip, and cursed his bad luck in always backing the loser. They were in a private room, and both impatient for their dinner.

"What the devil's the matter with Scott to-day?—he's generally as punctual as clock-work," said Sir Philip, "and I hear six striking in the coffee-room."

As he said these words, the influence of the hour began!—with a bolt, and a shock of inconceivable pain, his three front teeth fell on the floor—the Honourable Mr Scamp's eyes became darkened—his body became a mass of contusions—and when the waiter opened the door to announce dinner, he found the two gentlemen extended on the floor, writhing in pain, and in every respect punished and bruised the same as their two champions in the morning.

NICK THE THIRD.

"And this young man you talk of, this aristocratic plebeian, sir, resides at the Western Farm?"

"He does, Mr Froth, and I don't at all like his appearance, I assure you."

"How so?—I thought you said his appearance was very prepossessing?"

"Too much so, I'm afraid. I can't persuade myself he is the rustic in reality he pretends to be."

"Romance, for a thousand!—ah! what a lucky dog I am! I shall go this moment and make his acquaintance, hear all his story, add a few items from my own imagination, and furbish up a three-volume novel directly, 'The Sentimental Unknown,' or 'The Rustic in the Wilds'—a good thought, ain't it, sir?"

"I'm no judge, Mr Froth—but all that I can say is, I don't like his rambling so much in my park; and I rather suspect my daughter Maria knows more about him than we do."

"Hem!—indeed!—that makes it a different matter; but you know, sir, I have your consent; as to the heart, it is a mere trifle in these matters. Miss Maria shall be Mrs Froth in three days;—for, a word in your ear, Sir Timothy—I think I shall make a bold push for it, and carry her off."

"Carry her off! How, sir!—carry off my own daughter when you have my consent to marry her?"

"Just so. I hate such commonplace marriages, where fiddling old fellows of fathers give the obedient couple their blessing, and every thing is carried on with the precision and solemnity of a funeral! No; give me the runaway match—the galloping horses,—the pursuit,—the paragraph in the newspapers!—Zounds! the name of Froth shall make some noise in the world!"

"Mr Froth—sir—what do you mean, sir, by inculcating such doctrine in my presence, talking disrespectfully of the paternal benediction"——

"I beg pardon—don't get into a heat—'tis unpoetical."——

"What do you mean, sir, by talking to me about poetical?"

"'Tis unromantic, sir—'tis absurd."

"Oh, I see—I see. Mr Froth, I certainly promised you my daughter's hand; but, sir, this is not the way to gain it."—*Exit.*

"The old gentleman seems in a rage to-day; so much the better for my work. A novel never takes without a choleric old gentleman. But I must hie me to the Wester Farm, and

hold commune with this rustic. In the mean time I shall keep my eye on Miss Maria. I shall hire some simple fellow to watch her, and give me notice of what she has been doing during my absence.—Here, rustic—pastoral—clod!"

"Ees, zur, here I bees," said the peasant thus addressed.

"'Tis a fine day, peasant.—Now, respond to my interrogatories."

"Thank ye, zur—the same to you, zur."

"The name of this estate?"

"We calls un Morland Hall."

"Right. Thou art of an acute understanding. Knowest thou who resides in yonder mansion?"

"Ees, zur—it be old Zur Timothy, and his young woman."

"Woman! Aroint, thou unsophisticate! Elevate thy plebeian understanding to the empyrean heights of Apocalyptic glory, and call her angel."

"Ees, zur."

"Well, now, this is my command to thee—keep strict watch here in my absence, and on no account permit the beautiful Miss Maria Morland, to whom I am going to be married shortly—you need not jump so, but listen to what I say—on no account, I say, allow her to go towards the Wester Farm. There is some scoundrel hiding himself there, whom I suspect to be some lover or other she must have met with at her aunt's in Leicestershire. I am going to find out his disguise, and lull his watchfulness to rest,—for this very evening I have ordered my carriage to the corner of the hazel copse to carry her off."

"Ees, zur—surely."

"So now be watchful, and silver coin shall chink in each pocket."—*Exit.*

"To-night! this very night! Oh, my Maria, is this your constancy, after all the protestations you have made to me, to elope with such a paltry, contemptible blockhead! But how lucky he told me of their plans! I'll disconcert them. Ha! Maria herself coming this way. Who could believe that falsehood could dwell with so much beauty?"

"Rawdon, dear Rawdon, I have only this moment been able to escape——What! you don't seem glad to see me"

" You talk of making your escape, Miss Morland; you are an adept at making an escape."

" What mean you? Have I done any thing to offend you."

" Mr Froth, madam, has this moment informed me of your projected elopement this evening."

" Elopement!—this evening!—you are dreaming."

" I was not dreaming when I heard the conceited fool declare he was to carry you off to-night; that his carriage was to be at the door—and that he was to marry you immediately."

" Ha! ha!—it is only some contemptible invention of my miserable admirer—Elope with him! no, never with him."

" Is it with any one else, then? I may have misunderstood."

" With any one else? Why, how should I know! no one else has asked me."

" Eh? what? Fool, fool that I have been all this time! Forgive me, dearest Maria,—but I am worried past endurance by the concealment which you yourself recommended; why not let me reveal my name and rank at once to your father, and claim "——

" Oh, he can't hear of it! I tell you he is under a solemn obligation to give Mr Froth his vote and interest for my hand; but—but "——

" But what, my angel? Speak on."

" But—if—you know—if I were fairly marr—I mean if—you know—why, how slow you are, Rawdon!"

" Slow! never was such an angelic, dear, delightful—we'll elope before them; Froth may elope by himself, if he likes. We'll be off this very day—this very hour—but, confound my ill luck, I left my carriage twenty miles off, at the Falcon."

" Ah! how unfortunate! could you not have brought your carriage to the Farm?"

" With these clothes? in this disguise, Maria?"

" No; I see it was impossible. Hush, here's Mr Froth."

" Ha! Bumpkin, still here? that's right my boy, there's a crown for you—abscond, but wait at a little distance; I shall

discourse with thee anon. Your admirer, Miss Morland, at the Farm, is one of the cleverest fellows in England."

"My admirer at the Farm, Mr Froth! you surprise me."

"I knew I should; I always like to surprise the ladies. But positively he's a capital hit; he'll carry through the third volume swimmingly; such a power of face; such a twang; and such matchless impudence in denying that he was any thing but what he seemed. I told him I knew it all; that he was a gentleman; that he was in love with you, and to all that I said he only opened his great saucer eyes, and said, 'Zurely, zurely, zur.' Oh, 'twas infinitely provocative of cachinnation!"

"It must have been very amusing to hear a Devonshire peasant talk in the patois of his county."

"Exactly—Very amusing. But it was not a peasant, Miss Maria; no, no; it was the acting I admired; it was a gentleman, Miss Maria; and a friend of yours, too. But we'll trick him; your father is in favour of my claims upon your hand; but it is an exceedingly prosaic way of being married. Don't you think so?"

"Very."

"And you would prefer a more spirited match?"

"Yes."

"An elopement?"

"Perhaps"——

"Capital! thank ye, thank ye—'twill be an admirable incident towards the conclusion."

"What, sir?"

"Why, the elopement, to be sure, and the disappointment of the suitor, who is no doubt quite confident of success—won't it be capital?"

"Yes."

"How like a fool he'll look when he finds his angel gone off with another—won't he?"

"Yes—very."

"Well—but let us arrange it. My carriage shall be at the hazel-copse at half-past five—get all your things into it—slip quietly out yourself—four admirable posters—pistols

in the pockets. I have already put a purse under the seat, to pay as we go along. Ha! that's your sort—you'll do it?"

"Perhaps."

"Thank ye, thank ye—here, by this kiss I swear!"

"Zur, zur, here be Zur Timothy."

"Shepherd, never interrupt people on the point of kissing, 'tis cruel—ha! Miss Morland gone!—Well, clodpole, what didst thou remark in my absence?"

"Efaiks! the young woman an' me—uz got on prodigious foine—ees."

"You did? but she seemed to have no inclination to go to the Farm?"

"Noa—she stayed where she was—she zeemed well enough pleased wi' I."

"She is a lady of great discernment. But stay—I shall need your services again. Be punctually at the hazel-copse at half-past five. You will there see a carriage and four—help Miss Morland into it, and allow no one to go near her except yourself till I come. You may stay beside her to protect her in my absence."

"Ees, zur, I'll purtect she wi' my life."

"Good—rustic, thou art not the greatest fool in the world."

"Noa, zur—I be next to un, tho'."

"Thou'rt modest; be punctual—be faithful, and another crown rewards thy fidelity."—*Exit.*

"Well, this is better than I could possibly have expected—let me see—four o'clock. I'll go to the Farm, make all my arrangements, and be ready to take advantage of my good fortune at half-past five."

At half-past five a carriage with four posters was waiting at the appointed place. Miss Morland tripped quickly from the hall, and was received by her disguised admirer. "Dearest Maria, this is so kind!"

"Hush, hush—Mr Froth will be here instantly. I saw him with papa in the shrubbery, as I passed."

"Well, jump into the carriage, we must borrow Mr Froth's. Now, I'm in after you; shut the door, postilion, and drive like a whirlwind."

" Please, sir," said the postilion, " be you the gemman as hired the horses ?"

" Here, my good fellow, there's a sovereign—drive well, it shall be doubled."

" I thought you was Mr Froth. Jack, mind this here gemman is Mr Froth—a sovereign, Jack."

" Mum's the word," said Jack, and put foot in stirrup.

" Ho ! ho ! wo ! stop there !" cried Mr Froth, running at the top of his speed, followed in the distance by Sir Timothy; " stop, you cursed postilion ; that rustic is not I—that's my carriage. Miss Morland, for God's sake, stop ! Rustic ! bumpkin !"

" Hark ye, Mr Froth, I'm rustic and bumpkin no longer. This young lady has consented to be my wife, and my wife she shall be, thanks to your carriage and well-laid scheme. My name is Sir Henry Rawdon, and, by the light of heaven, if you move one step nearer, I'll blow out your brains with your own pistol—drive on !"

The carriage swept along at the rate of sixteen miles an hour, and Mr Froth could only say to Sir Timothy as he approached, " Done, by Jupiter ! *my* carriage, *my* pistols, *my* money, *my* plan, *my* every thing—it will be a brilliant event before the Finis. Can't we pursue them, sir ?"

" My horses are lame, Mr Froth."

" But mine are in the stable."

" My carriage is broken, Mr Froth."

" Hell and the devil !"

" Dinner is waiting, Mr Froth—it is now exactly six."

CROCODILE ISLAND.

My favourite inn at Oxford was the Golden Cross. The Angel was admirable in its way; the Star celestial, and the Mitre fit for an archbishop,—but the snug room on the left of the inner court of the Golden Cross was superior to them all. There seemed to be more comfort there than in the gaudier apartments of its rivals, and the company one met with was generally more inclined to be social. About eight o'clock in the evening was "the witching time o' night," for at that time the multitudinous coaches from the North poured in their hungry passengers to a plentiful hot supper. In these hurried refections I invariably joined. Half an hour very often sufficed to give me glimpses of good fellows whom it only required time to ripen into friends. Many strange mortals I saw, who furnished me with materials for thinking till the next evening; and sometimes I have been rewarded for the wing of a fowl by a glance from a pair of beautiful bright eyes, which knocked all the classics, and even Aldrich's Logic, out of my head for a week. Three coaches, I think, met at the Golden Cross. There was very little time for ceremony; the passengers made the best use of the short period allowed them, and devoted more attention to the viands before them than to the courtesies of polished life. I made myself generally useful as a carver, and did the honours of the table in the best manner I could. One night I was waiting impatiently for the arrival of the coaches, and wondering what sort of company they would present to me.

when a young man came into the room, and sat down at a small table before the fire, who immediately excited my curiosity. He called for sandwiches, and rum and water, and interrupted his active labours in swallowing them only by deep and often-repeated sighs. He was tall, and strikingly handsome. I should have guessed him to be little more than one or two and twenty, had it not been for a fixedness about the brow and eyes which we seldom meet with at so early a time of life. I was anxious to enter into conversation with him; for, as I have said, I was greatly interested by his appearance. I thought I knew the faces of all the University; and I was certain I had never met with him before. He had not the general appearance of a gownsman; he was tastefully and plainly dressed; obviously in very low spirits; and finished his second tumbler in the twinkling of a bed-post. As the third was laid down before him, I had just given the preliminary cough with which a stranger usually commences a conversation, when a rush was made into the room by the occupants of all the three coaches, and the Babel and confusion they created prevented me from executing my intention. On that occasion I did not join the party at the supper-table. I maintained my position at the corner of the chimney, very near the seat occupied by the youth who had so strongly excited my attention. The company was more than usually numerous; and a gentleman, closely muffled up, finding no room at the principal board, took his station at the same table with the stranger. The intruder threw off one or two cloaks and greatcoats, and untied an immense profusion of comforters and shawls, revealing the very commonplace countenance of a fat burly man about fifty years of age, with great staring blue eyes, and a lank flaxen wig of the lightest colour I had ever seen. This personage gave his orders to the waiter in a very imperious tone, to bring him a plate of cold beef, and a quart of brown stout, and exhibited various signs of impatience while his commands were executed.

"Cold night, sir," he said, at length addressing the youth. "I've travelled all the way from Manchester, and feel now as hungry as a hunter."

"It takes a man a long time to die of starvation," replied

the other. "Men have been known to subsist for ten days without tasting food."

"Thank God, that has never been my case. I would not abstain from food ten minutes longer to save my father from being hanged.—Make haste, waiter!"

The young man shook his head, and threw such an expression of perfect misery into his handsome features, that his companion was struck with it.

"I'm afraid," he said, "you are unhappy, in spite of being so young. You haven't wanted meat so long yourself, I hope?—Waiter, what the devil's keeping you with that 'ere beef?"

"Worse, worse," replied the other, in a hollow voice. "Youth is no preventive against care, or crime, or misery, or—*murder!*"

He added the last word with such a peculiar intonation, that the traveller started, and laid down his knife and fork, which he had that moment taken possession of, and gazed at him as if he were anxious to make out his meaning.

"Don't judge of me harshly," continued the youth; "but listen to me, I beseech you, only for a moment, and you will confer a great obligation on a fellow-creature, and prevent misery of which you can have no conception."

The man thus addressed remained motionless with surprise. He never lifted his eyes from the deeply melancholy countenance of the narrator; and I must confess I listened with no little earnestness to the disclosure he made myself.

"At sixteen years of age," he said, "I found myself a denizen of the wilds. Shaded from the summer heats by magnificent oaks of the primeval forest, where I lived; and secured from the winter's cold by skins of the tiger and lynx, I had not a desire ungratified. Groves of orange-trees spread themselves for hundreds of miles along our river: cocoa-nuts, and all the profusion of fruits and flowers with which the Great Spirit saw fit to beautify the original paradise of man, supplied every want. The eaglet's feather in my hair, the embroidery of my wampum belt, pointed out to my followers where their obedience was to be rendered; and I felt myself prouder of their unhesitating submission, and

the love with which they regarded me, than that the blood of a hundred kings flowed in my veins. I was Chief of the Chactaws and Muscogulges. My mother was of European origin: her grandfather had visited the then thinly populated regions of North America, in company with several hundred bold and heroic spirits like himself, whose aspirations for the independence and equality of man, had carried them beyond the dull cold letter of the law. His name yet survives in Tipperary; his boldness was the theme of song; and the twelve dastard mechanics, who, at the bidding of a judge, consented to deprive their country of its ornament and hero, and to banish him, with all the nobility of his nature fresh upon him, were stigmatised as traitors to the cause of freedom. In spite, however, of their cowardice and meanness, they could not resist displaying the veneration in which they held him, by entwining his wrists with massive belts; and even around his legs they suspended majestic iron chains, which rattled with surpassing grandeur whenever he moved. He had not been long in the new land to which his merits had thus transferred him, when his name became as illustrious in it as it had been in his own. The name of O'Flaherty is still, I understand, a word of fear to the sleepy-eyed burghers of the law-oppressed towns. But his course was as short as it was glorious. In leading a midnight attack on the storehouse of some tyrannising merchant, he was shot in the act of breaking open a box which contained a vast quantity of coin. He fell—and though he lived for several weeks, he kept his teeth close upon the residence of his followers. He died, as a hero should die, calm, collected, fearless. Even when the cord with which they had doomed him to perish was folded round his neck, he disdained to purchase an extension of his life by treachery to his friends. 'An O'Flaherty,' he said, 'can die, but he never peaches.' He left a son who was worthy of his father's fame. Like him he was inspired with an indomitable hatred of tyranny and restraint; with a noble and elevating desire to bring back those golden days, when all things were in common—when man, standing in the dignity of his original nature, took to himself whatever pleased his fancy, and owed no allegiance

to the debasing influence of the law. From this noble stock my mother was descended; and when her beauty and the heroism of her character had raised her to be the consort of the Forest King, she seemed to feel that she was just in the situation for which she was destined by her nature. The pride of ancestry, and the remembrance of the glorious achievements which had rendered the names of her forefathers illustrious, beamed from her eye, and imprinted a majesty upon her brow, which we seek for in vain in females of inglorious birth. Attakul-kulla, which, in the puerile language of the whites, means the Little Carpenter, was my father's name. On his head, when going forth to battle, he wore a paper cap of the most warlike form, surrounded with miniature saws, and surmounted with a golden gimlet. When I was born, the infinite nations, and kindreds, and tongues which confessed his sway, made every demonstration of satisfaction. The Muscogulges, the Simmoles, the Cherokees, the Chactaws, and all the other powerful tribes which bordered on the stately Alatamaha, sent deputies to the royal residence to congratulate their monarch on so auspicious an occasion. But, alas, this universal rejoicing was soon turned into mourning. Amongst those who came as ambassadors from the neighbouring powers was Sisquo Dumfki, the rat catcher, from a kingdom on the banks of the majestic Mississippi. This man was the most celebrated drinker of his nation. The strongest casine * seemed to have no more effect upon his senses than the purest water. At all feasts and solemn entertainments he was the champion of the Chicasaws. His fame was not unknown to the leaders of our tribe. My royal father burned with a passionate thirst for glory—and also for casine. In the happiness of my birth he challenged Sisquo Dumfki to a trial of their strength of stomach. For five days and nights they sat unceasingly swallowing the delicious fluid—five days and nights the calumet sent forth its smoke—never for one moment being lifted from the lips, save to make room for the cocoa-nut shell in which they drank their casine. Sleep at last seemed to

* Casine, a sort of usquebaugh in great request among the Indians—and a very good tipple in its way.—*Experto crede.*

weigh heavily on the lids of my royal father,—he was longer in the intervals of applying the goblet to his mouth,—and at last his hand refused its office—his head sank upon his shoulder; and his generous competitor, satisfied with the victory he had gained, covered the imperial person with a robe of leopard skin, and left him to his repose. Repose!—it was indeed his last repose—he opened his eyes but once—groaned heavily—then shouting 'Give me casine in pailfuls,'—for the ruling passion was strong to the latest hour—he became immoderately sick, and expired. I am afraid to state how much had been drunk in this prodigious contest; but it was said by the court flatterers on the occasion, that they had consumed as much liquid as would have supplied a navigable canal from lake Ouaquaphenogan to Talahasochte! I was an orphan; and though the death of my father had now raised me to a throne, I was bound by the customs of our nation to revenge it. In this feeling I was bred; I was allowed even from my infancy to drink nothing weaker than casine; my victuals were all seasoned with the strongest rum, so that by the time I was sixteen years of age, my head was so accustomed to the influence of spirituous liquors, that they were harmless to me as milk. Sisquo Dumfki was still alive, and still remained the unrivalled hero of his tribe. His death was decreed by my mother the very hour my father died; for this purpose she imbued my infant mind with unmitigated hatred of the murderer, as she called him, of my father, and taught me the happiness and glory of revenge. She talked to me of attaining her object by the hatchet and tomahawk, doubting perhaps that in spite of the training I had received, I should still be vanquished by the superhuman capacity of the rat-catcher; but I was confident in my own strength, and sending a trusty messenger to the encampment of the Chicasaws, I invited him to a solemn feast, and challenged him to a trial of strength. He came. You may imagine, sir, to yourself the feelings which agitated my bosom, when in my very presence, on the spot which was the scene of his triumph, I saw the perpetrator of a father's murder. Such, at least, was the light in which I had been taught, since the hour I was first suspended on the aromatic boughs

of the magnolia, to regard the proud, the generous, the lofty Sisquo Dumfki. How ill-founded was my hatred of that noble individual, you will discover in the sequel of my story.

"On this occasion he did not come alone. At his side, as he stood humbly before me, and paid his compliments to the queen, my mother, I marked with palpitating heart and flushing cheek, the most beautiful young girl I had ever seen. Her limbs, unconcealed by the foolish drapery in which the European damsels endeavour to hide their inferiority, were like polished marble, so smooth and round and beautifully shaped. Round her middle she wore a light bandage, embroidered with the feathers of the eagle, and this was the sole garment she had on, save that her head was ornamented with a beautiful diadem of heron's plumes. She was so young, so artless, and so ravishingly beautiful, that she took my heart captive at the first glance. I had at that time only twelve wives, selected by the regent from my own peculiar tribe, but several other nations had for some time been importuning me to choose a score or two of consorts from the loveliest of their maidens, and I had for some reason or other delayed complying with their requests. But now I was resolved to marry the whole nation, so as to secure this most beautiful of her sex. Alas! was it not madness thus to give way to these tender emotions, when the first word she uttered conveyed to me the appalling certainty that she was daughter of my deadliest foe—of the very being whom it had been the sole object of my education to enable me to drink to death! But a second look at the enchanting girl made me forgetful of every feeling of revenge. I spoke to her—I found her soft, sweet, delightful,—a daughter of the pathless forest, stately as the loftiest palms that waved their plumed heads in grandeur to the sky, and pure as the spiral ophrys, with its snow-white flowers, which blossoms so tenderly at their feet. Her name was Nemrooma, which in your language means the spotless lily—mine, I must inform you, was Quinmolla, the drinker of rum."——

Here the young man paused, and sighed deeply. I confess I was intensely interested by the manner in which he related his story; the traveller to whom he addressed himself,

was apparently fascinated by the wild beauty of his eyes; for the beef still lay untasted before him, and he could not remove his looks, even for a moment, from the countenance of the Indian king. "The feast was at last prepared," he continued, "and Sisquo Dumfki and myself were placed in conspicuous situations, but still far enough removed from the spectators to have our conversation private. We drank, and every time the casine hogshead was replenished, the lovely Nemrooma flitted towards us with the cocoa bowl. I retained her hand in mine, and gazed upon her with an expression in my glances, that sufficiently betrayed the interest she excited in my heart. She did not seem displeased with my admiration, but hung down her head and blushed, with such bewitching innocence and beauty, as rendered her a thousand times more enchanting in my eyes than ever.

"When we had now drunk unceasingly for three days, I said to my opponent, 'It grieves me, O Sisquo Dumfki, that this contest must be carried on to the death. Even if you are victorious in this trial, as sixteen years ago you were with my illustrious parent, you have no chance of escaping with your life. I myself, till I became acquainted with your noble sentiments, thirsted for your blood; and now that I know you all that a chief should be, my soul is tortured with regret that it will be impossible to save you.'

"With an unmoved countenance the hero heard me declare, as it were, his condemnation to certain death. He drained off the bowl which he happened to have in his hand, and replied, 'Death comes only once—the Great Spirit rejoices in the actions of majestic men. There are casine and tobacco in Elysium.'

"But I was resolved, if possible, to preserve my friend from the destruction prepared for him by my mother. 'Sisquo,' I said, 'let us delay the conclusion of our contest till some fitter opportunity. If you would save your life, and make me the happiest of kings and of mortals, pretend to be overcome by the casine, and ask to be left in this tent to sleep. I will place round it a body of my own guards, with orders to prevent all emissaries from the queen from entering it under pain of death. In the mean time I will wed your

daughter, if it seems good to you; and when by this means you are connected with the royal house, your life will become sacred, even from the vengeance of an offended woman.'

"'It seems good to me,' he replied, 'O mightiest potentate on Alatamaha's banks; and well pleased shall I resign the victory to you, in hopes of concluding a whole week with you on some future opportunity. With regard to Nemrooma —what is she but a silly flower, which will be too highly honoured by being transplanted into the gardens of the mighty Quinmolla?'

"In pursuance of this resolution, the noble Sisquo Dumfki assumed every appearance of total inebriety; he hiccuped, sang, roared, and finally sank down in a state of apparent insensibility. I confess I was astonished at the absence of Nemrooma on this interesting occasion. She came not near to cover her father with skins or leaves, and the duty was left to me of casting over him the royal mantle, and turning his feet towards the fire. With an expressive grasp of the hand, I left him to provide for his safety; for my mother, I was well aware, would take every means in her power to put him to death, in revenge for his victory over her husband. On issuing from the tent, I was hailed victor by ten thousand voices; the whole combined nations which owned my sway seemed delirious with the triumph I had achieved. No conqueror returning from a successful expedition, with the imperial robe purpled to a deeper die with the blood of thousands of his subjects, was ever received with such an enthusiasm of attachment. Calling aside the captain of my guard, I gave him the strictest injunctions to allow no one to enter the tent in which my illustrious competitor reposed, and proceeded to the wigwam of the queen. She was smoking when I entered; and the clouds which circled round her head gave to her piercing black eyes the likeness of two brilliant stars shining in a lowering heaven.

"'He is dead?' she said; 'my son would scarcely venture into the presence of his mother, if the murderer of his father was left alive.'

"'No, my mother,' I replied, 'he is sunk in deep sleep,

and we are sufficiently revenged by having conquered at his own weapons the hero of the Chicasaws.'

" ' He sleeps!—'tis well. It shall be my care to see that he never awakes—the tomahawk in a woman's hand is as sure as a poisonous drug in the bowl—for, mark me, Quinmolla, no powers can persuade me that the glorious Atta-kullkulla met with fair treatment at the hand of his rival at the feast. Have I not seen him often and often drink not only for five days, but for weeks and months together, and start up from his debauch as fresh as if he had been bathing in the warrior's streams in the shadowy land? Tell me, my son, that Sisquo Dumfki has for the last time seen the light of day.'

" ' I cannot,' I replied; ' it goes against my soul. He trusts me—why should I be faithless as the hyena or the white men!—No, my mother, let him live, for my spirit burns with admiration of the beautiful Nemrooma.'

" ' The feather in thy hair was torn surely from the pigeon's wing, and not the eagle's. What! hast thou no fear of the wrath of your father, whose form I often see gloomily reposing beneath the shadow of the stately palm-tree which he loved the most—fearest thou not lest, rushing from the land of spirits, he blast thee to the earth, with the sight of those frowning brows, which no mortal can look upon and live? Away! thou art unworthy of the blood of a thousand forest kings, who, long ere we removed to these plains, reigned on the shores of the Eternal Sire of Rivers;* and unworthier still (since you prefer your love to your revenge) of the ancestry of the Milesian lords, the O'Flaherties of the Tipperary wilds.'

" I stood astonished at this torrent of indignation, but my rage was at length roused as she proceeded:—' Nemrooma! and what seest thou in that paltry girl to wean thee from the nobler passion of vengeance? But cease to cherish fantastic hopes—the setting sun of yesterday went down upon her death.'

" ' What! hast thou dared to blight the lily which I intended to carry in my bosom—how? when? where?'

* Mississippi—Father of Rivers.

" ' The Alatamaha is broad and deep,' replied my mother, ' a canoe is frail and slight—ill may a maiden's arm contend with an impetuous river. Alone in a fragile bark—unused to the paddle—she was floated down the stream.'

" ' Wretch,' I exclaimed, losing all respect for her dignity, in the rage that seized me on account of her cruelty, ' you shall dearly pay for this. Ere the palm-trees are gilded seven times with the morning and evening suns, expect my return, and to suffer for your crimes.'

" I rushed into the open air as I spoke, and leaving tents, wigwams, friends, and subjects far behind me, I darted into the thickest of the forest, and pursued my way to a winding of the river, where I kept a canoe constantly prepared for my fishing expeditions. In it I found a supply of provisions, my rods and lines; my war-club, and my bow with poisoned arrows. I embarked, and pushing out into the middle of the stream, I pursued my way as rapidly as I could, in hopes of overtaking the beautiful Nemrooma, or perhaps of seeing her on the bank, if she should have been fortunate enough to swim to land. I kept my eyes intently fixed on every bend of the stream, in case her canoe should have been stranded, but in vain. All that day I kept on my course, and began to fear that ere I could overtake her, she would be carried down to a bluff in the river, which we had called Crocodile Island, and in that case I knew there was no hope of her safety. How peacefully, O Alatamaha, glided thy glorious expanse of waters, bearing the vast shadows of the umbrageous oaks upon their bosom, while thy banks were made vocal by the music of unnumbered birds! Little did such a scene of placid beauty accord with the tumultuous throbbings of Nemrooma's agonised breast. I thought what must have been her feelings while floating past these magnificent scenes, clothed with all the verdure of luxuriant nature, and enlivened with the glittering plumage of the various people of the skies, which glanced for a moment across her like glimpses of sunshine, and then flitted once more into the shadows of the woods. The banks were also ornamented with hanging garlands and bowers, formed, as it were, for the retreat of the river divinities, of the most beautiful shrubs and plants. And here and

there the eye was delighted with the large white flowers of the ipomea, surrounded with its dark-green leaves.

"But all these enchanting sights were insufficient to divert my thoughts from the probable fate of the beautiful Nemrooma. All night I plied my course, and, on the morning, could still discover no trace either of the girl or her canoe. About noon, I was made aware, by the extraordinary sounds which saluted my ears from a distance, that I was approaching the Crocodile lagoon. Inspired by fresh anxiety to overtake her, if possible, before entering on that fearful scene, I plied my utmost strength, and, at the bending of the river, was rewarded for all my labours and anxiety, by a view of the tender bark only a short way in front. Before I could place myself at her side, we had entered the dreadful lake, and the placid water was broken into a thousand ripples by the countless multitudes of the alligators which inhabited the place. The noise they made was of the most appalling description. Terrified at the perilous situation in which she was placed, the lovely girl uttered a scream of joy when she saw me, and had only self-possession enough to step from her own canoe into mine, when she fell down in a state of insensibility, from the violence of her contending feelings. No sooner was her frail bark deserted, than it became the object of a fearful battle to the monsters of the deep. A crocodile of prodigious size rushed towards the canoe from the reeds and high grass at the bank. His enormous body swelled; his plaited tail, brandished high, floated upon the lagoon. The waters, like a cataract, descended from his open jaws. Clouds of smoke issued from his nostrils. The earth trembled with his thunder. But immediately from the opposite side a rival champion emerged from the deep. They suddenly darted upon each other. The boiling surface of the lake marked their rapid course, and a terrific conflict commenced. Sometimes they sank to the bottom, folded together in horrid wreaths. The water became thick and discoloured. Again they rose to the surface, and their jaws clapped together with a noise that echoed through the surrounding forest. Again they sank, and the contest ended at the bottom of the lake; the vanquished monster making his escape to the sedges at the

shore. The conqueror now directed his course to the canoe. He raised his head and shoulders out of the water, and putting his little short paws into the boat he overturned it in an instant, and, in a few moments, fragments of it were swimming about in all directions. When Nemrooma saw the horrid scene, she clung convulsively to my arm, and in some degree impeded my efforts to effect our escape. I cautioned her to be still, and pushed with all my force towards the entrance of the river out of the lagoon. But, alas! fortune was here against us. It was the time at which myriads upon myriads of fish take their course up the river; and, as the stream is shallowest at this place, the crocodiles had chosen it as their position to intercept their prey. The whole water, for miles on each side, seemed alive with fish. The line of crocodiles extended from shore to shore; and it was the most horrific sight I ever witnessed, to see them dash into the broken ranks of the fish, and grind in their prodigious jaws a multitude of the largest trouts, whose tails flapped about their mouths and eyes, ere they had swallowed them. The horrid noise of their closing jaws—their rising with their prey, some feet upright above the water—the floods of foam and blood rushing out of their mouths, and the clouds of vapour issuing from their distended nostrils, were truly horrifying. Anxious to escape, I now began to paddle towards the shore of the lagoon, in order to land and wait till the army of fish had forced their passage, after which, I concluded, it would be easier for us to elude the satiated monsters; but ere we had got half way across the lake, I perceived we were pursued by two of an unusual size. From these escape by flight was impossible. They rapidly gained upon us, and at last one of them, raising himself out of the water, was just preparing to lay his paw upon the canoe, when I discharged an arrow, which luckily pierced his eye. With a roar of mingled rage and pain, he sank below the water, and left me to prepare for the assault of his companion. With a tremendous cry, he came up, and darted as swift as an arrow under my boat, emerging upright on my lee-quarter, with open jaws, and belching water and smoke, that fell upon me like rain in a hurricane. Leaving the bow to the skilful Nemrooma, I seized my club

and beat him about the head, and kept him for a few minutes at a distance. I saw, however, he was making preparations for his final spring, his mouth was opened to a fearful width, when an arrow struck him directly on the tongue, and pinned it to his jaw. He shouted as he felt the pain, and darted off, no doubt in quest of assistance. I shot to the bank with the speed of lightning, lifted the almost fainting Nemrooma from the canoe, and led her to the foot of an immense magnolia, which I perceived at no great distance. Before we left the river, however, we saw a prodigious number of crocodiles gathered round the boat, and one of them even crawled into it, and we heard our last hope of safety take its leave in the crash of its breaking sides, as it crumbled into fragments beneath the unwieldy monster's weight. The shore, I was aware, was also the resort of incredible multitudes of bears. Our provisions were exhausted, our arrows left in the canoe, and we could see no possibility of avoiding an excruciating death." The narrator here stopped for a moment, and the traveller, breathless with interest, said to him, "For God's sake, tell me, sir, how you got safe off?"

Whilst the stranger prepared to reply, I took advantage of the pause to look round the room. The supper table was deserted. The passengers had all paid their reckoning, and the waiter was standing expectingly at the corner of the sideboard.

"How we got safe off?" replied the Indian chief; "that's just the thing that puzzles me, and I thought you might perhaps be able to assist me."

"I assist you?" said the traveller; "how is that possible?"

"Coach is quite ready, sir," interrupted the waiter.

"The fact is," rejoined the young man, "I have just got to that point, in a tale I am writing for next month's Blackwood, and curse me if I know how to get naturally away from the Crocodile Island."

"Coach can't wait another moment, sir," said the waiter; "supper, two and sixpence."

"Supper!" exclaimed the traveller, "this d—d fellow with his cock-and-a-bull story, about being king of the jack-

daws, or kickshaws, or Lord knows what, has kept me from eating a morsel."

"Coachman can't wait a moment, sir."

"I tell you I haven't tasted a mouthful since I left Birmingham."

"You can't help me to a plan for getting the young people off the island?" said the youth.

"May the devil catch both of them, and a hundred crocodiles eat every bone in their skins!"

"Two and sixpence for supper, sir," said the waiter.

"Two hundred and sixty devils first," cried the traveller, in a prodigious passion, buttoning up his cloak and preparing to resume his journey—"let that infernal Indian king, who is only some lying scribbler in a magazine, pay for it himself, for I'm hanged if he hasn't cheated me out of my cold beef, and drunk every drop of my porter to the bargain."

"All right, gentlemen?" said the coachman in the yard.

"All right," replied the guard; "tsh! tsh! ya! hip—ts! ts!"—and the half-famished outside passenger was whirled along Corn Market, and over Magdalen Bridge, at the rate of eleven miles an hour.

THE END.

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